

## PREFACE

The rationale behind this work is to contribute towards easy accessibility and encouraging readers to understand the profound meaning behind these speeches and its significance in today's challenging and competitive world. It is with profound belief that this intellectual guidance can enable individual to develop sound understanding of various issues facing the cotemporary world and promote best practices to live a reflective and balanced life encompassed with strong spiritual values.

The speeches of Aga Khan IV intent to promote insights and reflections on the contemporary issues which are essential part of changing world and knowledge society in this 21st century. Some of the areas covered bridge the societies and create intellectual discourse; they enhance the notion of pluralism and cultural diversity; they strive to improve the image of Islam in the world; they debate the notion of clash of civilizations versus clash of ignorances; they promote civil society and democracy; they play significant role in promoting world peace and development; they establish new economic partnership for future; they emphasise the need of working towards improving quality of life of the underprivileged in the developing countries, improving quality of education and health services and role of institutions and philanthropic work in creating enabling environment.

This compilation entails almost all the speeches made by His Highness the Aga Khan IV from November 24, 1963 to June 9, 2009 available on the official websites indicated below. No work done by human hands is perfect or complete, it is quite possible that a few items have escaped our search, we shall be grateful if any such desiderata are pointed out by the readers.

There are always rooms for improvement, the speeches can further be organised thematically with back index to easily locate particular themes in the speeches.

Moreover, somebody can takeover the task of compiling all the interviews given by His Highness since 1957 todate. But with caution to source them from authentic and official first hand channels.

Finally, to highlight that all these speeches are directly sourced from official websites; Aga Khan Development Network ([akdn.org](http://akdn.org)), Institute of Ismaili Studies, London ([iis.ac.uk](http://iis.ac.uk)) and The Ismaili ([theismaili.org](http://theismaili.org)) with the only major work done was towards integrating and organising them into chronological order, and bringing uniformity in their fonts/formatting.

Rubina and Amin Qureshi  
Abu Dhabi, UAE  
June, 2009



**COLLECTION OF SPEECHES BY  
HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE KARIM AGA KHAN IV**  
From 24 November 1963 to 9 June 2009



SOURCES: Aga Khan Development Network (akdn.org),  
Institute of Ismaili Studies, London (iis.ac.uk) and  
The Ismaili (theismaili.org) websites

DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
9 June 2009	Edmonton, Canada	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Graduation Ceremony of the University of Alberta	11
28 May 2009	Paris, France	Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan à l'occasion de la remise de la distinction de Grand Mécène et de Grand Donateur du Ministère de la Culture Paris	16
8 May 2009	Lisbon, Portugal	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at Portugal's Academy of Sciences in Lisbon, Portugal	19
23 April 2009	Washington, USA	Global Philanthropy Forum, Washington, DC - Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Global Philanthropy Forum	21
6 December 2008	Ottawa, Canada	Inaugural Ceremony of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam (Ottawa, Canada)	26
16 November 2008	Avignon, France	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Avignon Forum - The value and importance of cultural diversity and its role in promoting peace and development (Avignon, France)	29
3 November 2008	Khorog, Tajikistan	Speech by Mawlana Hazar Imam At the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of The Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre, Khorog	33
03 July 2008	London, UK	Banquet in London Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Banquet (London, United Kingdom)	35
18 June 2008	Paris, France	Académie des Beaux-Arts Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan à l'occasion de son installation en tant que membre associé étranger de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts au fauteuil de Kenzo Tange à l'Institut de France (Paris, France)	37
12 June 2008	Paris, France	Afghanistan Conference, Paris Statement of His Highness at the Afghanistan Conference (Paris, France)	46
21 May 2008	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Speech by Mawlana Hazar Imam At the Foundation Ceremony of Dhaka Jamatkhana	48
20 May 2008	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of The Aga Khan Academy (Dhaka,	50

DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
		Bangladesh)	
19 May 2008	Dhaka, Bangladesh	State Banquet during the Golden Jubilee Visit in Bangladesh Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the State Banquet (Dhaka, Bangladesh)	53
26 April 2008	Burkina Faso	Dîner Officiel lors de la Visite du Jubilé d'Or au Burkina Faso Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan au Dîner Officiel offert par le Président de la République du Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso)	55
26 April 2008	Burkina Faso	Séminaire et Exposition de l'Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Ouagadougou Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan à l'Ouverture du Séminaire et de l'Exposition de l'AKAA sur les projets primés au Burkina Faso et en Afrique de l'Ouest (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso)	56
25 April 2008	Bamako, Mali	Création d'un parc urbain à Bamako Discours prononcé par Son Altesse l'Aga Khan lors de la cérémonie annonçant la création d'un parc urbain à Bamako (Bamako, Mali)	59
24 April 2008	Mopti, Mali	Inauguration of the Great Mosque of Mopti Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Ceremony of Inauguration of the Great Mosque of Mopti (Mopti, Mali)	61
24 April 2008	Timbuktu, Mali	Aga Khan receives Honorary Awards during his Visit in Timbuktu Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan following the Presentation of the Title of Honorary Citizen of the Islamic Community of Timbuktu and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Sankoré (Timbuktu, Mali)	63
23 April 2008	Bamako, Mali	Dîner Officiel lors de la Visite du Jubilé d'Or au Mali Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan au Dîner officiel offert par le Président de la République du Mali (Bamako, Mali)	65
18 April 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, USA	Annual Meeting of the International Baccalaureate "The Peterson Lecture" by His Highness the Aga Khan to the Annual Meeting of the International Baccalaureate, marking its 40th Anniversary (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)	67
12 April 2008	Austin, Texas, USA	Dinner during the Golden Jubilee Visit in Texas Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Dinner hosted by the Governor and First Lady of Texas (Austin, Texas, USA)	74
26 March 2008	Dubai, UAE	Speech by Mawlana Hazar Imam At the Inauguration of The Ismaili Centre Dubai	76

DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
		Wednesday, 26 March 2008	
27 November 2007	Madagascar	State Banquet during the Golden Jubilee Visit in Madagascar Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the State Banquet in Madagascar	78
20 November 2007	Maputo, Mozambique	State Banquet during the Golden Jubilee Visit in Mozambique Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the State Banquet (Maputo, Mozambique)	80
13 November 2007	Berlin, Germany	Conference on Central Asia and Europe, Berlin Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Conference on Central Asia and Europe : A New Economic Partnership for the 21st Century (Berlin, Germany)	83
26 October 2007	Cairo, Egypt	Inauguration of the Restored Monuments in Darb al-Ahmar Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration of the Restored Monuments in Darb al-Ahmar (Cairo, Egypt)	88
17 October 2007	Paris, France	'Musée-Musées' Round Table Louvre Museum Closing Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the "Musée-Musées" Round Table Louvre Museum (Paris, France)	91
4 September 2007	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2007 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Presentation Ceremony Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2007 Award Presentation Ceremony (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)	94
22 August 2007	Kampala, Uganda	Banquet Hosted in Honour of President Museveni Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Banquet Hosted in Honour of President Museveni (Kampala, Uganda)	97
22 August 2007	Kampala, Uganda	Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy, Kampala Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy (Kampala, Uganda)	100
21 August 2007	Kampala, Uganda	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the Bujagali Hydropower Project (Kampala, Uganda)	103
18 August 2007	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	State Banquet concluding the Golden Jubilee Visit in Tanzania Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the State Banquet (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania)	106
14 August 2007	Mombasa, Kenya	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Madrasa	110

DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
		Programme (Mombasa, Kenya)	
14 August 2007	Mombasa, Kenya	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Residential Campus Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony, Aga Khan Academy (Mombasa, Kenya)	112
13 August 2007	Nairobi, Kenya	State Banquet commencing the Golden Jubilee Visit in Kenya Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the State Banquet (Nairobi, Kenya)	116
13 August 2007	Nairobi, Kenya	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University (Nairobi, Kenya)	119
12 July 2007	London, UK	Spirit & Life Exhibition Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the "Spirit and Life" Exhibition (London, UK)	122
15 June 2007	Paris, France	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at Graduation Ceremony of the Masters of Public Affairs (MPA) Programme at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po)	124
04 June 2007	Kabul, Afghanistan	The Enabling Environment Conference, Kabul Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at The Enabling Environment Conference (Kabul, Afghanistan)	130
30 March 2007	Parma, Italy	Splendori a Corte Exhibition Inauguration speech at "Splendori a Corte", an exhibition of rare art and manuscripts from the Aga Khan Museum collection, being shown until 3 June 2007 at the Palazzo della Pilotta (Parma, Italy)	134
10 November 2006	Kampala, Uganda	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Official Opening of the Kampala Serena Hotel (Kampala, Uganda)	136
31 October 2006	Ishkashim, Tajikistan	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration of the Ishkashim Bridge (Ishkashim, Tajikistan)	139
25 October 2006	Ottawa, Canada	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan on the occasion of the Signing of the Funding Agreement for the Global Centre for Pluralism (Ottawa, Canada)	141
3 October 2006	Berlin, Germany	Die Quadriga Award Ceremony Laudatory Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Die Quadriga Award Ceremony (Berlin, Germany)	143
22 September 2006	Hyderabad, India	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone-Laying Ceremony of The Aga Khan Academy (Hyderabad, India)	145
15 June 2006	Cairo, Egypt	American University in Cairo Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the	149

DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
		Commencement Ceremony of the American University (Cairo, Egypt)	
20 May 2006	Tutzing, Germany	Address by His Highness the Aga Khan to the Tutzing Evangelical Academy Upon Receiving the "Tolerance" Award (Tutzing, Germany)	153
15 May 2006	Columbia, USA	Graduation Ceremony - Address by His Highness the Aga Khan to the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University (Columbia, USA)	157
8 April 2006	Kabul, Afghanistan	Inauguration of the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration of the French Medical Institute for Children (Kabul, Afghanistan)	163
2 March 2006	Toledo, Spain	Speech by the Aga Khan at the Royal Toledo Foundation Award Ceremony (Toledo, Spain)	165
12 February 2006	Evora, Spain	Evora University Symposium Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at Evora University Symposium: "Cosmopolitan Society, Human Safety and Rights in Plural and Peaceful Societies" (Evora, Spain)	167
12 February 2006	Evora, Portugal	University of Evora Honorary Doctorate Acceptance Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan - University of Evora Honorary Doctorate (Evora, Portugal)	172
31 January 2006	London, UK	Conference on Afghanistan, London Statement by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Conference on Afghanistan (London, UK)	174
19 December 2005	Lisbon, Portugal	Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Signing Ceremony of the Protocol of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Portugal and the Ismaili Imamat (Lisbon, Portugal)	175
3 December 2005	Karachi, Pakistan	Convocation of the Aga Khan University in Karachi Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Convocation of the Aga Khan University (Karachi, Pakistan)	178
8 November 2005	Kabul, Afghanistan	Opening of the Kabul Serena Hotel Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Opening of the Kabul Serena Hotel (Kabul, Afghanistan)	181
4 October 2005	Edinburgh, Scotland	The Carnegie Medal for Philanthropy Awarded to the Aga Khan Remarks Made by His Highness the Aga Khan Upon Receiving the Carnegie Medal for Philanthropy (Edinburgh, Scotland)	184

DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
3 October 2005	Berlin, Germany	Remarks Made by His Highness the Aga Khan Upon Receiving the Die Quadriga 2005 Prize in Recognition of the Work of the Aga Khan Development Network (Berlin, Germany)	185
25 June 2005	Beirut, Lebanon	Award received from the American University of Beirut Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the American University of Beirut (Beirut, Lebanon)	186
6 June 2005	Ottawa, Canada	Aga Khan and Governor General of Canada Initiate the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat Address by His Highness The Aga Khan at the Foundation Ceremony of The Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat (Ottawa, Canada)	188
22 May 2005	Nairobi, Kenya	Address made by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Opening Ceremony of the IPI World Congress and 54th General Assembly (Nairobi, Kenya)	191
7 April 2005	Oslo, Norway	Nobel Institute in Oslo Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Nobel Institute on Democratic Development, Pluralism and Civil Society (Oslo, Norway)	195
25 March 2005	Cairo, Egypt	Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park (Cairo, Egypt)	199
18 March 2005	Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Launch of the second phase of the expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital (Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania)	202
17 March 2005	Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence (Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania)	205
26 January 2005	Washington DC, USA	Scully Seminar - Architecture Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Scully Seminar (Washington DC, USA)	208
25 January 2005	Washington DC, USA	Scully Award Acceptance Speech Scully Award Acceptance Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan (Washington DC, USA)	210
27 November 2004	New Delhi, India	Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Ninth Award Cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (New Delhi, India)	212
6 September 2004	Berlin, Germany	Annual Conference of German Ambassadors Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Annual Conference of German Ambassadors (Berlin, Germany)	215

DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
25 June 2004	Maputo, Mozambique	Speech of His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy (Maputo, Mozambique)	222
18 June 2004	Toronto, Canada	Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Convocation of the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Toronto, Canada)	225
19 May 2004	Gatineau, Quebec, Canada	Leadership and Diversity Conference, Gatineau Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Leadership and Diversity Conference (Gatineau, Quebec - Canada)	228
20 December 2003	Mombasa, Kenya	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration Ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy Kilindini (Mombasa, Kenya)	233
19 December 2003	Athi River, Kenya	Opening of Alltex EPZ Limited at Athi River Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Opening of Alltex EPZ Limited at Athi River (Kenya)	237
13 December 2003	Dubai, UAE	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Laying Ceremony of the Ismaili Centre (Dubai, United Arab Emirates)	240
6 December 2003	Karachi, Pakistan	Address to 2003 Aga Khan University Convocation, Karachi, Pakistan	243
30 August 2003	Dushanbe, Tajikistan	Foundation Stone Ceremony of The Ismaili Centre, Dushanbe Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone Ceremony of The Ismaili Centre (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)	248
30 August 2003	Dushanbe, Tajikistan	Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum (Dushanbe, Tajikistan)	250
5 May 2003	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Annual Meeting of The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)	252
15 April 2003	New Delhi, India	Ceremony to Inaugurate the Restored Humayun's Tomb Gardens Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Ceremony to Inaugurate the Restored Humayun's Tomb Gardens (New Delhi, India)	257
31 October 2002	Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic	Plenary Session of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit Keynote Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Plenary Session of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic)	259



DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
30 October 2002	Osh, Kyrgyz Republic	Speech By His Highness the Aga Khan at the Opening Ceremony of the Aga Khan School (Osh, Kyrgyz Republic)	263
19 October 2003	London, UK	Address at the 25th Anniversary Graduation Ceremony of The Institute of Ismaili Studies, Le Meridien Grosvenor House Hotel	265
19 October 2003	London, UK	Speech at the Opening Session of 'Word of God, Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions', An International Colloquium organised by The Institute of Ismaili Studies, The Ismaili Centre, London	268
7 September 2002	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Prince Claus Fund's Conference on Culture and Development Keynote Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan Concluding the Prince Claus Fund's Conference on Culture and Development (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)	270
26 June 2002	Washington DC, USA	Remarks at the Opening of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Washington, DC, USA	274
23 June 2002	Houston, Texas, USA	Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center, Houston Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center (Houston, Texas, USA)	275
23 June 2002	Houston, Texas, USA	Banquet hosted in Honour of Governor Perry, Houston Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Banquet hosted in Honour of Governor Perry (Houston, Texas, USA)	277
7 November 2001	Aleppo, Syria	Concluding Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Winners' Seminar of The Aga Khan Award for Architecture (Aleppo, Syria)	279
6 November 2001	Aleppo, Syria	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the 2001 Award Presentation Ceremony of the Aga Khan Award For Architecture, The Citadel (Aleppo, Syria)	281
7 June 2001	Copenhagen, Denmark	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Archon Award Ceremony of Sigma Theta Tau International (Copenhagen, Denmark)	285
22 April 2001	Washington DC, USA	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Centenary Celebration Meeting, Association of American Universities - Making a Difference: Reflections on Shared Problems, Shared Opportunities and Shared Responsibilities in International Higher Education (Washington D.C., USA)	287
28 November 2000	Washington DC, USA	Remarks Prepared by His Highness The Aga Khan For The White House Conference on Culture and Diplomacy (Washington D.C., USA)	293
21 October 2000	Karachi,	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan - The Aga Khan	295

DATE	PLACE	SPEECH / REMARKS	PAGE
	Pakistan	University Convocation - Karachi, Pakistan	
17 October 2000	Islamabad, Pakistan	Address to the Plenary by His Highness the Aga Khan at The Conference on Indigenous Philanthropy (Islamabad, Pakistan)	300
10 November 1999	Washington DC, USA	Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the World Bank InfoDev Conference (Washington D.C., USA)	304
18 December 1996	Lisbon, Portugal	Speech at The Foundation Stone Ceremony of The Lisbon Ismaili Centre, Lisbon, Portugal.	310
26 May 1996	Rhode Island, USA	Baccalaureate Address at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA.	312
17 October 1996	Cape Town, South Africa	Keynote Address at the Commonwealth Press Union Conference, Cape Town, South Africa.	317
27 May 1994	Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA	Commencement Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA)	326
18 March 1987	Washington DC, USA	"The Enabling Environment: An Urgent Challenge", Keynote Address at the International Development Conference, Washington, DC, USA.	330
7 July 1983	London, UK	Speech at the Graduation Ceremony Organised by the Institute of Ismaili Studies and the University of London Institute of Education, London, United Kingdom.	334
25 September 1979	New York, USA	Speech to the Asia Society, New York, USA.	336
12 March 1976	Karachi, Pakistan	Presidential Address at the International Seerat Conference, Karachi, Pakistan.	340
6 February 1970	Hyderabad, Pakistan	Convocation Address at the University of Sind, Hyderabad, Pakistan.	342
30 November 1967	Peshawar, Pakistan	Convocation Address at Peshawar University, Peshawar, Pakistan.	345
24 November 1963	Manila, Philippines	Presidential Address at the First Anniversary of Mindanao University, Manilla, Philippines.	348

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Graduation Ceremony of the University of Alberta - 09 June 2009**

Eminent Chancellor  
Madame President  
Mr. Chairman of the Board  
Your Worship the Mayor  
Faculty, Graduates, Friends and Family

What a pleasure and privilege it is to be here today, as this great university moves into its second century. I am deeply grateful for your kind invitation, for the wonderful honour you have given me, and for the rich partnership which the Aga Khan University has enjoyed with the University of Alberta. I am pleased, too, that this partnership will be extended under the new Agreement we have just signed between our two universities, along with the institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network.

My warmest congratulations go to all who graduate today and to the families, friends and faculty members who share in your proud achievements.

I read recently about a graduation ceremony like this one which was marred, perhaps, by an excess of confidence. The editors of the class yearbook were great believers in technology and entrusted the final proofreading to the computer program called spell-check, something which you undoubtedly know a thing or two about!

Unfortunately, as The Week magazine reported, it was "a bad week for spell check," as the automatic program changed the names of several students. For example, Alessandra Ippolito was listed as Alexandria Impolite, while Max Zupanovic was rechristened Max Supernova. And Kathy Carbaugh's photo appeared next to the name Kathy Airbag.

After hearing this, you may want to check on how your own names are spelled on your programmes and diplomas and what mischief spell-check might do to your name if it had the chance. I for one decided that I should spell check my own name. I found that, while there was no "Aga Khan", there was something called an "Aga" Cooker. It was defined as one of England's oldest stoves and ovens ...now somewhat outdated ... but with a distinctive whistle every time it frizzled the food within!

As you may know, the Aga Khan is, in fact, the Imam, or spiritual leader, of the Ismaili Muslim community, a role I inherited from my grandfather over fifty years ago. Even as the University of Alberta was celebrating its 100th anniversary last year, I was marking my own golden jubilee. To mark both anniversaries, to express my profound thanks, and to celebrate our growing partnership, I am presenting a gift today which reflects both my Islamic heritage and your University traditions. I have just visited a parcel of land within the Devonian Gardens of the University, where we plan to create a traditional Islamic Garden. We hope this space will be of educational and aesthetic value, a setting for learning more about Muslim culture and design, as well as a place for public reflection.

Over these past five decades, much of my attention has been focused on the challenges of the developing world, and it is in this arena that our partnership with the University of Alberta has been most active. The University's commitment to the global context and the developing world has been inspiring, and the match between your areas of expertise and developing world requirements, as I understand them, has been nothing short of extraordinary.

For many years, your leaders have set priorities which intersect with vital development needs, including such areas as agricultural sciences and nutrition, public health and telemedicine, natural resource management, information technology, environmental and energy sciences, and so many

others, including your respect for diversity, and for the rights and the roles of traditional societies. Roderick Fraser, your President Emeritus and a Trustee of the Aga Khan University, is one of the many Canadian visionaries who have helped forge this remarkable record.

I was pleased to read recently the University's own description of its continuing international goals: increasing joint programmes, encouraging semesters abroad and broadening exchange programmes, building international community service and internship opportunities, and creating new academic programmes with a global perspective.

What an impressive agenda! It represents precisely the sort of outreach from Western intellectual centres which I believe is essential for global progress. And it coincides with a period in which the developing world itself is recognizing, as never before, the centrality of education to its future - and the leading role of North American universities in that process.

Let me mention one more critical element in this picture. The international impact of this University's work is reinforced by the high regard in which Canada itself is held as a valued development partner. Canada comes to that challenge with impressive credentials; no history as a colonial power, a successful pluralist society, high standards of living, and a readiness to welcome a global leadership role.

In today's community of nations, a country's standing is no longer recognized simply by what it can achieve for itself, but just as much by what it can do for others. In this context, Canada has become a world "power" in the best sense of that word.

As young people with a Canadian education, you will be warmly welcomed by the global community if you should choose to spend some time in international activity, making the world your workplace. The path has been well prepared by eminent Canadians who have gone before you.

As I have thought about the challenge of international development and its relationship to education, I have come to identify four key areas of concern. These are issues which have engaged the Aga Khan Development Network for over two decades, including the innovative curricular planning of our schools and universities. I thought I might discuss them briefly with you today.

The first of these themes concerns the faltering instruments of government in many countries of Asia and Africa: Afghanistan and Pakistan, Kenya and Uganda, for example, are plagued by dysfunctional constitutional frameworks which ignore inherited traditions, poorly apportion responsibilities among central versus provincial authorities, fail to ensure equity and liberty for minority and tribal communities, and are unresponsive to their vast rural populations.

We are facing, I believe, years and even decades of continued testing among various forms of democratic governance. At the present moment, we may well be seeing more failures than successes.

I feel strongly that students of government from across the world can help address this situation, suggesting a creative range of constitutional options and best practices in places where governmental systems have not yet had time to mature. And educational institutions at all levels should give more attention to the disciplines of comparative government.

This does not mean the imposition of political systems from outside. But it is not enough to replace coercion from beyond one's borders with coercions from one's own capital city. Governments everywhere should reflect the will and the aspirations of all their peoples.

One central challenge here is that age-old traditions of the countryside often seem unrelated to the challenges of running a modern nation-state - and plugging it into a changing global economy.

Reconciling the global and the local, the urban and the rural, the regional and the national, is one of the great political challenges of our time - and it is a challenge to which Canadians can speak with special insight.

We have also learned that simplistic systems don't work; whether built around the arrogance of colonialism, the rigidities of communism, the romantic dreams of nationalism, or the naive promises of untrammelled capitalism. But I do believe old governing methods can be improved, and that appropriate, effective new models can be created. And I know that great universities like this one can play an important role in that process.

The second topic I would raise today is the role of civil society in the development process. By civil society I mean an array of institutions which operate on a private, voluntary basis, but are driven by public motivations. They include institutions dedicated to education, to culture, to health, and to environmental improvement; they embrace commercial, labour, professional and ethnic associations, as well as institutions of religion and the media.

Even when governments are fragile, or even nearly paralyzed in their functioning, strong civil society organizations can advance the social and economic order as they have done in Kenya and Bangladesh. Civil society is a complex matrix of influences, but its impact can be enormous, especially in rural environments, where, for example, the need for stronger secondary as well as primary schools is dramatically evident. We have also learned that effective civil progress involves a multiplicity of inputs and a variety of partners - including universities. The broad scope of programmes here at the University of Alberta is a tremendous resource, actual and potential, for the development of civil society throughout the world.

My third theme today is ethics. Neither the political nor the civil sector can accomplish anything of value unless those who steer those institutions are motivated and directed by demanding moral standards.

When we talk about the ethical realm, when we attack corruption, we are inclined to think primarily about government and politics. I am one, however, who believes that corruption is just as acute, and perhaps even more damaging, when the ethics of the civil and private sectors deteriorate. We know from recent headlines about scoundrels from the American financial scene to the halls of European parliaments - and we can certainly do without either. But the problem extends into every area of human enterprise. When a construction company cheats on the quality of materials for a school or a bridge, when a teacher skimps on class work in order to sell his time privately, when a doctor recommends a drug because of incentives from a pharmaceutical company, when a bank loan is skewed by kickbacks, or a student paper is plagiarized from the internet - when the norms of fairness and decency are violated in any way, then the foundations of society are undermined. And the damage is felt most immediately in the most vulnerable societies, where fraud is often neither reported nor corrected, but simply accepted as an inevitable condition of life.

Again, universities are among the institutions which can respond most effectively to such threats. It seems to me to be the responsibility of educators everywhere to help develop 'ethically literate' people who can reason morally whenever they analyse and resolve problems, who see the world through the lens of ethics, who can articulate their moral reasoning clearly - even in a world of cultural and religious diversity - and have the courage to make tough choices. And it is clear that the quality of ethical leadership throughout society can in great measure be shaped by our educational institutions.

This analysis brings me to my fourth theme: the centrality of pluralism as a way of thinking in a world which is simultaneously becoming more diversified and more interactive. Pluralism means not only accepting, but embracing human difference. It sees the world's variety as a blessing rather than a

burden, regarding encounters with the “Other” as opportunities rather than as threats. Pluralism does not mean homogenization - denying what is different to seek superficial accommodation. To the contrary, pluralism respects the role of individual identity in building a richer world.

Pluralism means reconciling what is unique in our individual traditions with a profound sense of what connects us to all of humankind.

The Holy Quran says: “O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.” What a unique and profound statement about the Oneness of humanity!

And yet, just recollect the number of situations where pluralism has failed, dramatically and detestably, in just the last ten years: in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Sri Lanka, in Kenya, Rwanda, Darfur and the Congo, in Iraq and in the Balkans and in Northern Ireland – and the list could go on. No continent has been spared.

A pluralistic attitude is not something with which people are born. An instinctive fear of what is different is perhaps a more common human trait. But such fear is a condition which can be transcended - and that is why teaching about pluralism is such an important objective - at every educational level.

In the final analysis, no nation, no race, no individual has a monopoly of intelligence or virtue. If we are to pursue the ideal of meritocracy in human endeavour, then its most perfect form will grow out of a respect for human pluralism, so that we can harness the very best contributions from whomever and wherever they may come.

President Obama cited his own country as a relevant example when he said last week in Cairo, and I quote: “the United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known ... we are shaped by every culture, drawn from every end of the earth...”

All of these considerations have led me to create a new institution that you may have heard about - it is called the Global Centre for Pluralism - a joint project which we have established in Ottawa, in partnership with the Government of Canada. We hope that it will help us all to better understand and implement the pluralistic approaches on which our future now depends.

When peoples think pluralistically, there is no limit to what they can do together, joining forces across a wide variety of divides - and even across long distances - so that a University based in the far western reaches of North America can join hands and hearts with institutions which are, quite precisely, on the opposite side of the planet. As the world shrinks, and as contact among diverse peoples increases, some would argue that we face an inevitable “clash of civilizations.” My own conviction, however, is that we face today “a clash of ignorances.” It continually amazes me, for example, how little is understood about the Muslim civilizations and cultures in the non-Islamic world and how little is taught. When President Obama described the richness of that history in his Cairo speech, he was telling a story which is unfamiliar to many in the West. A pluralistic commitment will call upon educators, everywhere, to address such dangerous ignorances, in this and in other fields.

We live today in what has been called the Knowledge Society. But even as our knowledge advances at lightning speed, we also become more vulnerable to gaps in that knowledge, to what we might describe as Knowledge deficits. Each of the four themes I have outlined today points to a specific knowledge deficit, and each deficit constitutes a challenging obstacle to progress, justice and stability in many countries and for many decades.

The great universities of the world have a special mission - a high calling I believe - to take a leading role in the struggle to narrow and even to eliminate the knowledge deficits which challenge our world - a role which your University has been playing so well.

My congratulations once again. My prayer is that God will be with you, inspiring you and empowering you, in all the good things you will be doing in the days and years ahead.

Thank you.

**Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan à l'occasion de la remise de la distinction de Grand Mécène et de Grand Donateur du Ministère de la Culture Paris, le 28 mai 2009 - 28 May 2009**

Majesté,  
Madame la Ministre de la Culture,  
Monsieur le Président du Sénat,  
Monsieur le Chancelier de l'Institut de France,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Hautes personnalités,  
Mesdames, Messieurs,

Madame la Ministre, je vous ai dit, tout à l'heure en arrivant, mon très grand plaisir de me trouver aujourd'hui à vos côtés, dans ce quadrilatère historique du Palais Royal, qui abrite tant de grandes institutions politiques et culturelles de la République française :

- le Conseil constitutionnel,
- le Conseil d'Etat,
- le Ministère de la culture,
- la Comédie française,

le tout à proximité immédiate du Musée du Louvre.

C'est dans ce cadre merveilleux que vous m'avez fait le grand honneur de me remettre, au nom de la République, la médaille de grand donateur et de grand mécène du ministère de la Culture. Vous avez par là, bien voulu distinguer ce que j'ai souhaité faire pour la France à Chantilly et pour la culture dans notre monde.

Sachez que ce geste me va droit au cœur, notamment pour la raison qu'il est très rare dans le monde qu'un Etat, par ses représentants les plus éminents, soit attentif à faire un signe d'amitié comme celui que vous me faites aujourd'hui.

J'ajouterai que je suis très sensible à la dimension symbolique que la France a donnée officiellement à cette médaille en y gravant le sceau de la première République française et, selon votre belle tradition, une femme représentant la Liberté. On ne dira en effet jamais assez combien la Culture est facteur de Liberté, ni combien la Liberté est ferment de Culture.

Vous avez bien voulu rappeler les impulsions que j'ai données au fil des décennies à de nombreux projets culturels dans le monde. Pour les raisons que j'ai exposées sous la Coupole il n'y a guère, les projets culturels sont en effet devenus pour moi une priorité très rapidement, après avoir pris la succession de mon grand père, il y a plus de 50 ans.

C'est en effet à cette époque que je suis devenu le 49ème Imam des quelque vingt millions de musulmans shiites imamis ismailis, populations majoritairement rurales et pauvres, disséminées dans 35 pays, principalement en Asie Centrale et du Sud-ouest, en Afrique, et au Moyen-Orient.

Je suis ainsi l'héritier d'une culture, je devrais dire 'de cultures' au pluriel, plus que millénaire.



Je n'oublie cependant pas que grâce à mon père, dès ma tendre enfance, j'ai été sensibilisé très tôt à la peinture française, notamment aux œuvres de grands maîtres comme Corot, Utrillo, Vlaminck, Boudin ou Raoul Dufy. Cet éveil, mêlé à mes lectures de Maurois, Mauriac, Gide et bien d'autres grands auteurs, m'a fait découvrir les français, la France et le regard que les français portent sur le monde. J'ai aimé ce que j'ai vu, comme ce que j'ai lu, et voici pourquoi, entre autres, j'habite la France depuis maintenant presque quarante ans.

J'ai tenté de mettre ce foisonnement d'expériences à profit, au bénéfice de Chantilly.

Dans ce bref moment qui nous réunit, je voudrais vous dire quelques mots sur ce que j'ai entrepris dans cette belle ville, œuvre humaine et monumentale, riche et complexe, que l'histoire de France a léguée à l'humanité.

Beaucoup ici savent que je conduis ce projet avec l'Etat, la région de Picardie, le département de l'Oise, la ville de Chantilly, l'Institut de France et France Galop. Je n'oublie pas évidemment les collaborations fructueuses avec le monde académique et le secteur privé.

Je salue d'ailleurs ici, outre vous-même Madame la Ministre, Monsieur le Chancelier de l'Institut et Monsieur le Préfet de l'Oise.

Je voudrais vous dire principalement que j'ai mis en œuvre, au bénéfice de Chantilly, certains enseignements importants acquis dans les pays lointains que je mentionnais tout à l'heure, ce qui peut étonner quand on sait combien sont différentes ces cultures et la culture française.

En fait, j'ai acquis la conviction, à l'occasion de ce que j'ai vu sous d'autre cieux, que les ressorts humains et économiques en action dans les projets de rénovation ou de réhabilitation sont très proches, quel que soit le lieu.

Puisque je dois être bref, je dirai qu'au milieu d'innombrables considérations, le point essentiel pour moi est qu'un projet culturel centré sur un lieu d'histoire ou de tradition doit prendre en compte l'environnement immédiat dans lequel il s'inscrit. Autrement dit, au-delà du soin apporté à la renaissance de tel ou tel monument ou lieu historique, il convient d'intégrer dans le programme de redéveloppement l'ensemble des espaces publics et privés proches.

Pourquoi ceci me paraît-il si essentiel que je n'entreprends jamais un projet culturel sans avoir cette idée à l'esprit ? Simplement parce que, lorsque l'on renouvelle ou que l'on restaure à la fois le lieu de culture, au sens traditionnel du terme, et sa périphérie, on observe toujours deux conséquences :

- un renouveau économique au service des populations alentours, en particulier des plus modestes ;
- une pérennisation de l'effort de rénovation ou de restauration sur la très longue durée.

Ce concept est tout simple.

L'élément de complexité réside, vous le savez, dans la nécessité de gérer sur le long terme ce qui doit devenir ou redevenir un centre de développement économique pérenne et à dimension humaine. Il est alors absolument nécessaire de travailler en collaboration avec toutes les parties prenantes.

J'ai eu la grande joie de constater, au-delà d'un enthousiasme de tous pour le projet de Chantilly, que chacun a eu à cœur de partager avec moi son expérience, et d'accueillir la mienne. Ceci fait qu'aujourd'hui le projet avance à grands pas.

C'est ainsi qu'après la création de la Fondation pour la sauvegarde et le développement du Domaine de Chantilly :

- le champ de courses, ses bâtiments et ses accès ont été remis en état ou réaménagés, ce qui a fait repartir une activité qui s'essouffait ;
- le parc de Le Nôtre a fait l'objet d'une rénovation en profondeur ; c'est ainsi que tout récemment, après d'importants travaux hydrauliques, les fontaines du parc commencent à revivre. Nous avons eu un long débat sur la hauteur qu'il fallait donner à cette fontaine. On a éliminé la concurrence avec le lac Léman ... Et puis on a cherché à comprendre ce que Le Nôtre voulait et ça, ça a été beaucoup plus difficile et je me suis fié aux spécialistes. Si vous allez visiter Chantilly, sachez que la hauteur des fontaines a été un sujet de très, très grands et profonds débats !
- quant aux Grandes Ecuries du septième Prince de Condé, elles font l'objet de travaux considérables qui vont être amplifiés dans le temps ;
- à cet égard, je voudrais souligner que le Musée vivant du cheval, qui y trouve naturellement sa place, sera le seul au monde consacré exclusivement à l'histoire du cheval sous toutes les latitudes ;
- également, le Musée Condé fait l'objet de toutes nos attentions et l'on peut ici évoquer la restauration, comme vous l'avez dit Madame la Ministre, de la merveilleuse Grande Singerie créée en 1737 ...
- sans oublier les travaux préparatoires sur le château lui-même.

Au-delà, dans l'esprit de ce que je vous disais il y a un instant, de nombreux projets économiques sont en discussion, dont le plus avancé est celui de la construction de l'hôtel du Jeu de Paume à l'entrée de Chantilly, ensemble qui reviendra à terme à l'Institut de France.

J'espère profondément que ces efforts sur la longue durée, permettront aux habitants de Chantilly et de sa région de vivre mieux dans ce cadre séculaire qui leur est si familier.

Pour ma part, au-delà de l'affection pour la France que ma famille a exprimée depuis des générations, j'ai voulu, en m'impliquant personnellement dans ce projet, remercier votre beau pays de m'avoir accueilli avec tant de chaleur.

De fait, mes liens personnels et institutionnels avec la France sont d'une telle qualité qu'au fil des années la France devient progressivement le centre de mes activités, notamment en matière de politique de développement au bénéfice des populations les plus pauvres de la planète.

Madame la Ministre, vous avez voulu me remercier et m'honorer et j'en ressens une grande fierté. Cependant, compte tenu de ce que je viens de dire, veuillez accepter que ce soit moi qui remercie la France à travers vous.

## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Academy of Sciences, in Lisbon, Portugal - 08 May 2009

Professor Oliveira,  
Minister of National Defence, Mr Nuno Severiano Teixeira,  
Minister of Culture, Mr Pinto Ribeiro,  
Apostolic Nuncio, Rino Passagata,  
Excellencies,  
Members of the Academy,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an immense honour for me to be here today and to have been admitted to the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon. It reminds me of the day on which I was given an honorary doctorate from the University of Evora. And I do not want to let this occasion pass, without recollecting that very, very special day.

You here in the Academy are guardians of old knowledge and developers of new knowledge. And I thought I would share with you today, very briefly, some of the reflections that have occurred to me since I have completed my journeys in the developing world during my Golden Jubilee.

I visited numerous countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and I came into contact with men and women who were intelligent, mature, responsible and who were seeking to build nation states – nation states which would be autonomous, which would be well governed, whose economies would be competent, but these builders were seeking to build on the basis of an enormous knowledge deficit. These men and women in public office simply did not have access to the demography of men and women who are sufficiently educated to be able to man the institutions of state.

And I have come away with another question stemming from my point that there is a deficit of knowledge? The key question is a deficit of **what** knowledge? What knowledge is necessary in these environments, so that in the decades ahead we can look towards stable nation states around the world?

My conclusion was that the deficit of knowledge is in many areas which are not being offered in education, which are not being taught. Because what have been inherited are curricula of the past, reflections of the past, attitudes of the past, rather than looking forwards, asking what do future generations **need** to know. And that is the central question which needs to be asked, and on which an academy such as this can have such a massive impact.

Let me mention three areas. First of all, there is the nature of society in these countries. One of the characteristics of all these countries is that they have pluralist societies. And if pluralism is not part of the educational curriculum, the leaders and the peoples of these societies will always be at risk of conflict, because they are not accustomed to pluralism and they do not value it. People are not born valuing pluralism. Therefore pluralism is the sort of subject which needs to be part of education, from the youngest age onwards.

Another aspect is ethics. But not ethics born of dogma, but ethics in civil society. Because when governments fail in these parts of the world, it is civil society which steps in to sustain development. And when ethics are not part of education, teaching, examinations; when they are not part of medicine, the quality of care; when they are not part of financial services,

then civil society is undermined. Ethics in civil society is another aspect which is absolutely critical.

The third example is constitutionality. So many countries which I have visited have stumbled into, run into difficulties in governance, because the national constitutions were not designed and conceived to serve the profiles of those countries. And therefore, teaching in areas such as comparative government is another area which is absolutely critical.

If these are the subjects which are necessary today, what are the subjects which will be necessary tomorrow? Is the developing world going to continue in this deficit of knowledge? Or are we going to enable it to move forwards in to new areas of knowledge? My conviction is that we have to help these countries move into new areas of knowledge. And therefore, I think of areas such as the space sciences, such as the neurosciences. There are so many new areas of inquiry which, unless we make an effort to share globally, we will continue to have vast populations around the world who will continue in this knowledge deficit.

Portugal has an extraordinary history. It has been influencing the world for centuries. Your influence today is not limited to Europe. Your influence is massive through your presence in South America. A country like Brazil is a case study for many countries around the world. Brazil is dealing with new areas of knowledge in air transport – that is a new area of knowledge – competing with the best in the world in areas such as agriculture, the development of cash crops, and sugar at new levels of technology.

So the influence of Portugal and the capacity of Portugal to influence what is happening around the world is immense. And it is in this context that I want to thank you for electing me a member of the Academy and for the opportunity you have given me to encourage you to use your global influence, through your history, through your knowledge, through your contacts with the developing world, to bring to the rest of the world what is best in your knowledge.

Thank you.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Global Philanthropy Forum Washington DC. - 23 April 2009**

President Jane Wales, thank you for those very generous comments.

I'd like to say how happy I am to share in this year's Global Philanthropy Forum.

Participants,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a special pleasure for me to be with you tonight, for I look upon you as particularly serious and informed partners in the work of global understanding and international development.

As you may know, I recently marked my 50th anniversary in my role as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. This responsibility connects me intimately with the traditions of the Islamic faith and cultures, even while my education and a host of personal and professional associations have acquainted me with the non-Islamic West. The relationship of these two worlds is a subject of considerable importance for me – a relationship which some define, regrettably, as an inevitable *Clash of Civilizations*. My own observation, however – and my deep conviction – is that we can more accurately describe it as a *Clash of Ignorances*.

It is not my purpose tonight to detail the misunderstandings which have plagued this relationship. Let me only submit that educational systems on both sides have failed mightily in this regard – and so have some religious institutions. That – at this time in human history – the Judeo Christian and Muslim societies should know so little about one another never ceases to astonish – to stun – and to pain me.

As a Muslim leader speaking in Washington this evening, it seems appropriate that I cite the words of President Obama, in his recent speech in Ankara. As he put it, pledging a “broader engagement with the Muslim world, we will listen carefully, we will bridge misunderstandings, and we will seek common ground.” I know that the vast majority of the Islamic world shares these objectives.

Among the areas where we *can* find common ground is our mutual effort to address the problem of persistent global poverty, especially the endemic poverty of the developing world. Surely this is an area where we can listen and learn and grow together – establishing ever-stronger bonds of understanding. One of the great principles of Islam, in all its interpretations, is the elimination of poverty in society, and philanthropy's centrality in this duty.

When I succeeded my grandfather as Aga Khan in 1957, I was a student at Harvard – but speaking mostly French. I got extra English practice, however, from my new official routine of regular communication with Africa and Asia – and, in the bargain, was kept in great good humour by the amazing typographic errors which inevitably arose. But then computerized spell check programs came along - and all those charming idiosyncrasies disappeared!

I recently noticed, to my joy, however, that this new invention is not a fail safe protection. Consider this recent item in the publication “The Week: “Bad week for spell-check: Several Pennsylvania high school students had their last names changed in their yearbook by an automatic computer program, Alessandra Ippolito was listed as Alexandria

Impolite, while Max Zupanovic was rechristened Max Supernova. And Kathy Carbaugh's photo appeared next to the name Kathy Airbag."

After reading this, I decided that maybe I should act prudently and spell check my own name. And I found that, while there was no "Aga Khan", there was an "Aga" Cooker. It was defined as one of England's oldest stoves and ovens – now somewhat outdated – but with a distinctive whistle every time it frizzled the food within!

But returning to a more serious topic let me submit this evening a few of my own reflections on the developing world that I know a central focus of my interests over fifty years. For, in coming to understand the life of widely dispersed Ismaili communities across the globe, I have also become immersed in their host societies.

The essential goal of global development has been to create and sustain effective nation states – coherent societies that are well governed, economically self-sustaining, equitable in treating their peoples, peaceful amongst themselves, and sensitive to their impact on planetary sustainability.

This is a complex objective, a moving target, and a humbling challenge. Sadly, the response in the places I know best has often been "one step forward and two steps back." Today, some forty percent of UN member nations are categorized as "failed democracies" – unable to meet popular aspirations for a better quality of life. The recent global economic crisis – along with the world food crisis – has sharply accentuated these problems.

But why have our efforts to change that picture over five decades not borne greater fruit? Measured against history, where have things gone wrong? Given the progress we have made in so many fields, why have we been so relatively ineffective in sharing that progress more equitably, and in making it more permanent?

My response centers on one principal observation: I believe the industrialized world has often expected developing societies to behave as if they were similar to the established nation states of the West, forgetting the centuries, and the processes which molded the Western democracies. Forgotten, for one thing, is the fact that economic development in Western nations was accompanied by massive urbanization. Yet today, in the countries of Asia and Africa where we work, over 70 percent of the population is rural. If you compare the two situations, they are one and a half to two and half centuries apart. Similarly, the profound diversity of these impoverished societies, infinitely greater than that among nascent European nation states, is too often unrecognized, or under-estimated, or misunderstood. Ethnic, religious, social, regional, economic, linguistic and political diversities are like a kaleidoscope that history shakes every day.

One symptom of this problem has been the high failure rate of constitutional structures in many developing countries, often because minority groups – who often make up the bulk of the population – fear they will be marginalized by any centralized authority. But did today's developed countries not face similar challenges as they progressed toward nationhood?

If there is an historic misperception here, it has had several consequences for development activities.

The first concerns what I would call the dominant player fallacy – a tendency to place too much reliance in national governments and other institutions which may have relatively superficial connections to life at the grass-roots level.

Urban-based outsiders often look at these situations from the perspective of the city center looking out to a distant countryside, searching for quick and convenient levers of influence. Those who look from the bottom-up, however, see a much much more complex picture. The lines of force in these rural societies are often profoundly centrifugal, reflecting a highly fragmented array of influences. But was this not also true during the building of Western nation states?

Age old systems of religious, tribal or inherited family authority still have enormous influence in these societies. Local identities which often cross the artificial frontiers of the colonial past are more powerful than outsiders may assume. These values and traditions must be understood, embraced, and related to modern life, so that development can build on them. We have found that these age-old forces are among the best levers we have for improving the quality of life of rural peoples, even in cross frontier situations.

Nation building may require centralized authority, but if that authority is not trusted by rural communities, then instability is inevitable. The building of successful nation states in many of the countries in which I work will depend – as it did in the West – on providing significantly greater access for rural populations, who are generally in the majority.

If these reflections are well founded, then what is urgently needed is a massive, creative new development effort towards rural populations. Informed strategic thinking at the national level must be matched by a profound, engagement at the local level. Global philanthropy, public private partnerships and the best of human knowledge must be harnessed. As the World Bank recognized in its recent Poverty Study, local concerns must be targeted, providing roads and markets, sharpening the capacities of village governments, working to smooth social inequalities, and improving access to health and education services. The very definition of poverty is the absence of such quality of life indicators in civil society among rural populations.

It is in this context that I must share with you tonight my concern that too much of the developmental effort – especially in the fields of health and education - have been focused on urban environments.

I whole-heartedly support, for example, the goal of free and universal access to primary education. But I would just as whole-heartedly challenge this objective if it comes at the expense of secondary and higher education. How can credible leadership be nurtured in rural environments when rural children have nowhere to go after primary school? The experience of the Aga Khan Development Network is that secondary education for rural youth is a condition sine qua non for sustainable progress.

Similarly despite various advances in preventive medicine, rural peoples – often 70% of the population – are badly served in the area of curative care. Comparisons show sharp rural disadvantages in fields such as trauma care and emergency medicine, curbing infant mortality, or diagnosing correctly the need for tertiary care. Building an effective nation state, today as in earlier centuries, requires that the quality of rural life must be a daily concern of government. Ideally, national progress should be as effective, as equitable, and as visible, over similar time-frames, in rural areas as in urban ones. Amongst other considerations, how else will we be able to slow, if not stop, the increasing trend of major cities of Asia and Africa to become ungovernable human slums?

From this general analysis, let me turn to our own experience. The Aga Khan Development Network, if only as a matter of scale, is incapable of massively redressing the rural-urban

imbalances where we work. It is possible, however, to focus on areas of extreme isolation, extreme poverty and extreme potential risk - where human despair feeds the temptation to join criminal gangs or local militia or the drug economy. The World Bank refers to these areas as "lagging regions". We have focused recently on three prototypical situations.

Badakhshan is a sensitive region of eastern Tajikistan and eastern Afghanistan where the same ethnic community is divided by a river which has now become a national border, and where both communities live in extreme poverty and are highly isolated from their respective capitals of Dushanbe and Kabul. There is a significant Shia Ismaili Muslim presence in both areas.

Southern Tanzania and Northern Mozambique is a region of eastern Africa where large numbers of rural Sunni Muslims live in extreme poverty. A third case, Rural Bihar, in India, involves six states where the Sachar Committee Report, commissioned by the Indian government, has courageously described how Muslim peoples have been distanced from the development story since 1947.

All three of these regions are works in progress. The first two are post conflict situations, relatively homogeneous, and sparsely populated, while the third is densely populated, and culturally diverse. All three have acute potential to become explosive, and our AKDN goal is to identify such areas as primary targets for philanthropy.

We have also developed a guiding concept in approaching these situations. We call it Multi-Input Area Development – or MIAD. An emphasis on multiple inputs is a crucial consequence of looking at the development arena from the bottom up. Singular inputs alone cannot generate, in the time available, and across the spectrum of needs, sufficient effective change to reverse trends towards famine or towards conflict.

Similarly, we want to measure outcomes in such cases by a more complex array of criteria. What we call our Quality of Life Assessments go beyond simple economic measurements – considering the broad array of conditions – quantitative and qualitative – which the poor themselves take into account when they assess their own well-being.

Secretary Clinton echoed the concern for multiple inputs and multiple assessments when she mentioned to you yesterday the need for diversified partnerships among governments, philanthropies, businesses, NGO's, universities, unions, faith communities and individuals. The Aga Khan network includes partners from most of these categories – sustaining our Multi-Input strategy. I applaud her concern – and yours – for the importance of such alliances.

Northern Pakistan provides another example, in a challenging high mountain environment, of a complex approach to rural stabilization. Innovations in water and land management have been accompanied by a new focus on local choice through village organizations. A "productive public infrastructure" has emerged, including roads, irrigation channels, and small bridges, as well as improved health and education services. Historic palaces and forts along the old Silk Route have been restored and reused as tourism sites, reviving cultural pluralism and pride, diversifying the economy and enlarging the labor market. The provision of micro credit and the development of village savings funds have also played a key role.

For nearly 25 years, we have also worked in a large, once-degraded neighborhood, sprawling among and atop the ruins of old Islamic Cairo – built 1000 years ago by my ancestors, the Fatimid Caliphs. This is an urban location – but occupied by an essentially



rural population, striving to become urbanized. The project was environmental and archaeological at the start – but it grew into a residential, recreational and cultural citiscape – which last year attracted 1.8 million visitors. The local population has new access to microcredit and has been trained and employed not only for restoring the complex, but also for maintaining it – as a new expression of civil society.

Because historic sites are often located among concentrations of destitute peoples, they can become a linchpin for development. We work now with such sites as Bagh-e-Babur in Kabul, the old Stone Town in Zanzibar, the Aleppo Citadel in Syria, the historic Moghal sites at New Delhi and Lahore, and the old mud mosques of Mopti and Djenné and Timbuktu, in northern Mali. Altogether, more than one million impoverished people will be touched by these projects. Such investments in restoring the world's cultural patrimony do not compete with investing in its social and economic development. Indeed, they go hand in hand.

In all these cases, it is the interaction of many elements that creates a dynamic momentum, bringing together people from different classes, cultures, and disciplines, and welcoming partners who live across the street – and partners who live across the planet. Each case is singular, and each requires multiple inputs. And it is here that those present tonight can have such an important impact. Working together on programme development, on sharing specialized knowledge, and on competent implementation, we can all contribute more effectively to the reduction of global poverty.

Let me say in closing, how much I admire the work you are doing, the commitment you feel, and the dreams you have embraced. I hope and trust that we will have many opportunities to renew and extend our sense of partnership as we work toward building strong and healthy nation states around our globe.

If we are to succeed we will need, first, to readjust our orientation by focusing on the immense size and diversity of rural populations whether they are in peri-urban or rural environments. For no-one can dispute, I think, that a large number of the world's recent problems have been born in the countrysides of the poorest continents.

Finally, we will need to address these problems with a much stronger sense of urgency. What we may have been content to achieve in 25 years, we must now aim to do in 10 years.

A mighty challenge, no doubt.

Thank you.

## **Inaugural Ceremony of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat (Ottawa, Canada) 06 December 2008**

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Mrs. Harper  
Chief Justice Beverly McLaughlin and Mr. McCardle  
Madame Adrienne Clarkson and Mr. John Ralston Saul  
Your Excellencies  
Honourable Ministers  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Je voudrais commencer mes commentaires aujourd'hui en vous souhaitant la bienvenue dans le nouveau bâtiment de la Délégation de l'imamat ismaili à Ottawa. Nous sommes ravis que vous participiez à cette journée importante pour nous.

My warmest thanks go out to all of you for being part of this wonderful occasion. I particularly want to thank the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Stephen Harper, for the honour of his presence, at a time of immense global challenges for those who bear the responsibilities of national leadership.

Let me also express my gratitude to the former Governor General of Canada, Madame Adrienne Clarkson. She was present at the Foundation Stone Ceremony for this building – and she thoughtfully predicted then, that this edifice would not be just another monumental structure, but would, both in its unity and its transparency, represent, as she put it, “the way in which the world can work when we are all at our best.”

I am also deeply grateful to the National Capital Commission and to all those who helped to design, construct and decorate this Delegation building, including all those who so generously volunteered their energies. This is the third important new Canadian building with which I will have been associated over the last five years. It affirms our intent to share, within a western setting, the best of Islamic life and heritage. This new Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat, like the Ismaili Centre and the Aga Khan Museum to be built in Toronto, reflects our conviction that buildings can do more than simply house people and programmes. They can also reflect our deepest values, as great architecture captures esoteric thought in physical form.

When I invited Professor Maki, a master of form and light, to design this building, I made a suggestion to him – one that I hoped would help connect this place symbolically to the Faith of Islam. The suggestion I made focused on creating a certain mystique, centred around the beautiful mysteries of rock crystal.

Why rock crystal? Because of its translucency, its multiple planes, and the fascination of its colours – all of which present themselves differently as light moves around them. The hues of rock crystal are subtle, striking and widely varied – for they can be clear or milky, white, or rose coloured, or smoky, or golden, or black.

It is because of these qualities that rock crystal seems to be such an appropriate symbol of the profound beauty and the ever-unfolding mystery of Creation itself – and the Creator. As the Holy Quran so powerfully affirms, “Allah is the Creator and the Master of the heavens and the earth.” And then it continues: “Everything in the heavens and on earth, and everything between them, and everything beneath the soil, belongs to Him.”

But in Islamic thought, as in this building, beauty and mystery are not separated from intellect – in fact, the reverse is true. As we use our intellect to gain new knowledge about Creation, we come to see even more profoundly the depth and breadth of its mysteries. We explore unknown regions beneath the seas - and in outer space. We reach back over hundreds of millions of years in time. Extra-ordinary fossilised geological specimens seize our imagination - palm leaves, amethyst flowers, hedgehog quartz, sea lilies, chrysanthemum and a rich panoply of shells. Indeed, these wonders are found beneath the very soil on which we tread – in every corner of the world - and they connect us with far distant epochs and environments.

And the more we discover, the more we know, the more we penetrate just below the surface of our normal lives – the more our imagination staggers. Just think for example what might lie below the surfaces of celestial bodies all across the far flung reaches of our universe. What we feel, even as we learn, is an ever-renewed sense of wonder, indeed, a powerful sense of awe – and of Divine inspiration.

Using rock crystal's iridescent mystery as an inspiration for this building, does indeed provide an appropriate symbol of the Timelessness, the Power and the Mystery of Allah as the Lord of Creation.

What we celebrate today can thus be seen as a new creative link between the spiritual dimensions of Islam and the cultures of the West. Even more particularly, it represents another new bridge between the peoples of Islam and the peoples of Canada.

Many of you may remember that my personal involvement with Canada dates back more than three decades when, at a time of great upheaval in Uganda, many members of the Ismaili community and others found here a new home in which they could quickly re-build their lives. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, and expressing habits of mind and spirit which have long been central to the Canadian character, this country provided a welcoming haven to those who had been victimised by history.

Since that time, Ismailis from other parts of the world have also come to Canada, contributing not only to Canadian society, but also to the diverse mosaic of the global Ismaili community.

One of the principal reasons, I believe, for the great rapport between the Ismaili and Canadian communities through the years is our shared commitment to a common ethical framework - and especially to the ideals of pluralism. By this I mean not only social pluralism, which embraces a diversity of ethnic and religious groups, but also pluralism in our thinking about government, and pluralism in our approach to other institutions. One of the reasons governments have failed in highly diverse settings around the world is that dogma has too often been enshrined at the price of more flexible, pluralistic approaches to political and economic challenges.

Within Islam itself, we can see a broad sense of pluralism, including a variety of spiritual interpretations, and a diversity of governments and social institutions.

The spirit of pluralism, at its base, is a response to the realities of diversity – a way of reconciling difference on the one hand with cooperation and common purpose on the other. It is an attitude, a way of thinking, which regards our differences not as threats but as gifts - as occasions for learning, stretching, growing - and at the same time, as occasions for appreciating anew the beauties of one's own identity.

The challenge of pluralism is particularly important for those who are called upon to lead diversified communities and to act in diversified environments. It is a challenge to which Canadians have responded nobly through the years - and it is also a challenge which has been central to our work through the Aga Khan Development Network, what we call AKDN.

The AKDN's principal focus, as you know, has been the under-served populations of Central and South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Our approach has observed the principles of neutrality and pragmatism, but this has not always been an easy matter. Turbulence and discontinuity have characterised these regions, including the transition from colonial rule, the struggles of the Cold War, the tensions of the nuclear age, the rise of new nationalisms - of both the right and the left, as well as revolutions in communications and transportation which have so dramatically increased encounters among different peoples. Our Network has inevitably been drawn into a tangled variety of social and cultural contexts - including highly fragile, conflictual and post-conflictual situations. Our response has always been to focus on the pursuit of pluralistic progress.

Even against the most daunting challenges, social and economic progress can and must be a shared experience, based on a cosmopolitan ethic and nurtured by a spirit of genuine partnership.

When we have talked of development in this context over the years, we have always found responsive interlocutors in Canada. We recognise together the interdependence of economic progress on one hand and inclusive governmental structures on the other. We affirm together the centrality of communication and education in any progressive formula. We both embrace the interdependent role of various social sectors - private and governmental and voluntary - including the institutions of pluralistic civil society.

For the last quarter century, Canada, especially through CIDA, has been actively collaborating with the Aga Khan Development Network to support sustainable development in marginalised communities in Africa and in Asia. In the course of this work we have seen at first hand Canadian global leadership at its best – thoughtful, empathetic and avoiding both intellectual pretensions and dogmatic simplifications.

Our work together in northern Pakistan is one rich chapter in this story. Our newer efforts in places like Tajikistan and Afghanistan have opened further horizons. We could also point directly to early childhood programmes in Africa. Or we could speak of our projects in higher education, working with Canadian universities such as McMaster, McGill, University of Toronto, University of Alberta, and University of Calgary. The establishment of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat represents yet another step on a long path. It will give us another platform for strengthening and extending our relationship. It will be a site for robust dialogue, intellectual exchange, and the forging of new partnerships - with government, and with the institutions of civil society and the private sector of Canada and so many other countries. To be able to site this building on Confederation Boulevard, in close proximity to your major national institutions as well as representations from abroad, is itself a symbol of the outgoing, interactive spirit which must guide our response to global challenges.

It is our prayer that the establishment of the Delegation will provide a strongly anchored, ever-expanding opportunity for rich collaboration - in the devoted service of ancient values, in the intelligent recognition of new realities, and in a common commitment to our shared dreams of a better world.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Avignon Forum: The value and importance of cultural diversity and its role in promoting peace and development (Avignon, France) - 16 November 2008**

Minister of Culture and Communication,  
European Commissioner for the Information Society and the Media,  
Ministers,  
Representatives of the European Union,  
Representatives of international organisations and institutions,  
Representatives of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region and the Département of  
Vaucluse,  
Your worship, the Deputy Mayoress of Avignon,  
Representatives from the world of culture and economy,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr President of the Republic and you, Madam Minister, I'm honoured and delighted to have been invited to say a few words at this Avignon Forum.

You have asked me to talk a little about my experience of a subject that you know is very dear to my heart:

"The value and importance of cultural diversity and its role in promoting peace and development"

In fact, exactly fifty years ago, when I inherited the Imamate from grandfather, I discovered that wars, indifference, negligence and the drive to standardise cultures through colonisation, or the desire to modernise the built environment, had resulted in the irreparable loss of important cultural characteristics in developing countries, particularly those in Muslim countries.

In other words, the distinctive cultural features of those countries, whose key importance is stressed by UNESCO's definition, were being eroded.

Something had to be done.

I want to talk to you today about my efforts to defend these cultures, through the Aga Khan Development Network, and specifically through its dedicated agency, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

This Trust for Culture focuses its activities in three main areas:

the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme,  
the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and  
an Education and Culture Programme.

These activities, which are themselves subdivided into a variety of subsidiary programmes in many countries, obey three key principles:

to increase the beneficiaries' independence,  
to involve local communities, and  
to secure the support of public and private partners.

I thought it would be best, in the allotted time, to give you three examples of projects carried out within the framework of this institution, so they might serve as a useful point of reference for the discussions that will take place in this Forum over the next few days.

All our programmes have three aspects in common:

- they are carried out in a poor environment where there are considerable centrifugal, sometimes even conflicting, forces at play;
- they are designed to have maximum beneficial impact on the economies of the populations involved and their quality of life in the broadest sense of the term;
- they are planned in the long term, over a period of up to twenty-five years, enabling them to become self-sufficient both financially as well as in terms of human resources.

That said, the first example I shall talk about is a programme being run in the field of intellectual works, namely music.

I should like you to consider the complex history, diversity and inventiveness of the music of countries like Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan or Afghanistan.

Sadly I discovered that the musical cultures of Central Asia were struggling for the reasons I gave a moment ago. Not only were they being consigned to oblivion, but the musical models imposed on them from outside, often with ulterior political motives, were creating a colourless cultural uniformity.

These processes have resulted in a loss of identity, not only in the field of music discussed here, but also in many others.

In a world that claims to be globalised, there are some who might regard cultural standardisation as natural, even desirable.

For my part, I believe that marks of individual and group cultural identity generate an inner strength which is conducive to peaceful relations. I also believe in the power of plurality, without which there is no possibility of exchange. In my view, this idea is integral to the very definition of genuine quality of life.

With regard to the example of music used here, through the Trust we met the challenge by creating the Aga Khan Music Initiative. We called this project the “Silk Road”, since all the countries concerned were situated along that unique route linking China and Europe.

The long-term objective is:

- to boost education and research;
- to train new generations of young artists;
- to contribute to the revival of festivals, concerts and performances in the countries from which the music originated;
- to bring the music to audiences not only in neighbouring countries, but also in other Muslim countries and the West.

We are now witnessing a true musical revival in these faraway countries. Furthermore, the great advantage of this type of programme is that it not only promotes cultural pluralism, but

also underscores the legitimate function of pluralism as a principle of social organisation, which may be harder to comprehend.

Although this result cannot be measured with the tools of an economist, it unfailingly contributes every time to a renewed awareness of specific cultural characteristics and a considerable improvement in the quality of life. This is no doubt the reason why, when a community has witnessed and participated in an experiment to promote pluralism, it is eager to see it applied in other areas.

Equally important as the rediscovery and worldwide circulation of traditional music, is that young architects should be able to draw inspiration freely from all traditions, starting with their own, and this is my second example. Architects in the East should have access to the best sources in the West and vice versa.

It was with this aim in view that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture created ARCHNET, basing it at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to ensure its future growth as technology progresses.

Once again, this is an intellectual work, an online forum, and an electronic encyclopaedia of the built environment.

This tool allows architects from developing countries in particular to gain access to knowledge and techniques so that they can construct buildings for which there is no precedent in their history, such as airports, hospitals or modern office blocks, without precluding the integration of elements from their own culture. In other words, although there is no question of dismissing the technical contributions of modernity, they must be assimilated into their intended socio-cultural context.

Our objective, when we created ARCHNET, which has now been achieved, was to create a global community of architects, town planners, teachers and students sharing their knowledge online, in the field of the built environment. According to the most recent figures, this community now has over 60,000 members. By October, the number of "hits" on the website and web pages visited was 30% up on last year.

My third example is the restoration by the Aga Khan Trust of historic cities and their parks. We have done work in this field in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Egypt, Syria, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Zanzibar and Mali. We have therefore helped breathe new life into rural and urban economies by revitalising the historic sites and buildings that form the living environment for people who are among the poorest inhabitants of the countries concerned.

In this context, it is only right to mention the incredible impetus provided by public-private partnerships. I'll quote here Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India in 2004, who said: "I hope that more public-private partnerships can be evolved to maintain and restore the monuments of our ancestors, which often lie in a neglected condition in our cities and towns." I must say that I was particularly delighted to hear him make this statement at Emperor Humayun's Mausoleum, near Delhi, which was restored as the result of an effective partnership between the Indian state and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

We have learned how effective and valuable public-private partnerships can be. This is exactly the lesson I have put into practice for the restoration of the Chantilly estate, a programme that I am personally running in conjunction with the Institut de France, the town of Chantilly, the Département de l'Oise, the Picardy Region and France-Galop.

The impact of these particular examples can be measured with traditional economic tools, such as the effect on a given demography and the quantifiable improvement in quality of life parameters. This leads me to hope, for the first time, that this type of activity can be financed by the large international financial agencies, without our running the risk of being called financial carnivores.

So my experience concurs with what the Minister was saying earlier: "Culture isn't a world apart, it lies within an all too real economic context."

Finally, I should like to put into different words something I have already said indirectly: I am very concerned about the gulf between cultures.

However, this gulf is not what has mistakenly been called the clash of civilisations.

This gulf is potentially just as dangerous as a clash, because ignorance about other people and a lack of understanding of the valuable benefits of plurality can lead to contempt, hatred and war.

A gulf however can be filled in, whereas a clash is irreparable.

We are all profoundly aware of this gulf and this is fundamentally why we take action. I have given you several examples, but there are many others, like the Aga Khan Museum which is to be built in Toronto to become the specialist centre for Islamic art in North America and initiate exchanges with all the leading museums in the West.

I sincerely hope that these partnerships will be able to develop with governments, international organisations and their development agencies. They have supported and helped us greatly in the past and I'm sure that this tool will provide new ways for them to continue their activities.

As this Avignon Forum is being held under the aegis of the French Presidency of the European Union, I should like to end by paying tribute to the effective cooperation that exists between the European Union and the development agencies of many Member States on the one hand, and the Aga Khan Development Network on the other. And since we are in France, I should particularly like to express my pleasure at the cooperation that exists with the French Development Agency and its network.

I hope I have demonstrated the hugely beneficial effects of serious initiatives in the field of culture, whether they can be measured in economic terms or can be perceived in terms of the progress made by pluralism and, as a result, the improvement in quality of life. Culture is not just an added extra or a luxury. QED. Thank you.



**Speech by Mawlana Hazar Imam  
At the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of  
The Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre, Khorog  
Monday, 3 November 2008**

*Bismillahir Rahamanir Rahim*

Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Asadullo Ghulomov,  
Your Excellency Governor Qodiri Qosim,  
Your Excellency Governor Munshi Abdul Majeed,  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman

I would like to begin these comments this morning by welcoming you to this most happy occasion, this historic event, to celebrate the laying of the Foundation Stone of this first Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre in Tajik-Badakhshan.

I would like to say how deeply happy I am, that this Foundation Stone ceremony will occur during the 50th year of my Imamate. I can think of few events in this year which will have given me the happiness which this one today will bring me and inshallah all the people who will participate in this event.

At the beginning of these comments, it is appropriate to situate here, one of the functions of the Ismaili Centre in the tradition of Muslim piety. For many centuries, a prominent feature of the Muslim religious landscape has been the variety of spaces of gathering co-existing harmoniously with the masjid, which in itself has accommodated a range of diverse institutional spaces for educational, social and reflective purposes.

Historically serving communities of different interpretations and spiritual affiliations, these spaces have retained their cultural nomenclatures and characteristics, from *ribat* and *zawiyya* to *khanqa* and *jamatkhana*.

The congregational space incorporated within the Ismaili Centre belongs to the historic category of *jamatkhana*, an institutional category that also serves a number of sister Sunni and Shia communities, in their respective contexts, in many parts of the world. Here, the Jamatkhana will be reserved for traditions and practices specific to the Shia Ismaili tariqah of Islam. The Centre on the other hand, will be a symbol of confluence between the spiritual and the secular in Islam.

I would like today to situate what the Centre and the Jamatkhana aspires to be in the town of Khorog. It is my hope that the town of Khorog will become the *Jewel of the Pamir*. The gem cutter, the person who prepares the jewel, cuts it and cuts it and polishes it and cuts it and polishes it until he has fashioned the gem stone in to a stone of absolute purity with no clouding, absolute purity. And the gem cutter has to do his work very carefully with a lot of time, because if he makes a mistake, he can not bring back the part of the stone that he cut away by mistake. And this is what I hope, with the President of the Republic, His Excellency the Governor, we will be able to do over the years ahead, to improve the town of Khorog, to make it the Jewel of the Pamir.

And we will seek to improve, all of us together, the quality of the environment in which we live, bringing clean water to everywhere where the people live, bringing energy to all the places where people live, improving the schools and health facilities, improving and restoring our historic buildings which are representations today of our cultural history, and thanks to the Governor Niyozmammadov and his gift of land, we today have a new park in Khorog, inshallah we will build the University of Central Asia, we will build this Centre, and while working together, step by step, we will make Khorog the Jewel of the Pamir.

And I want to thank again His Excellency the President, the Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency the Governor, the Governor of Afghan-Badakhshan who has done us the honour of being here today, I want to thank everyone who has made this event possible today. But more

than that, who is making new things happen in partnership and in friendship. Like the University of Central Asia, which is a very complex exercise, but inshallah, we will do it properly.

And every time I come back to Khorog, I will ask myself: Are we moving towards making Khorog the Jewel of the Pamir?

Thank you.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Banquet in London, United Kingdom - 3 July 2008**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
Baroness Thatcher  
Secretary of State John Denham  
High Representative Solana  
Your Excellencies  
My Lords  
Ladies and Gentlemen

What a great pleasure it is for me to welcome you tonight - to greet so many friends, old and new - and to acknowledge how much your friendship - and that of this country - has meant to me.

I am deeply grateful for your warm welcome. I am no stranger to London, but this is a very special visit, as it is part of a year-long celebration - the Golden Jubilee anniversary of my Imamate.

I came to this office in 1957 upon the passing away of my grandfather. I was an undergraduate university student at that time - and perhaps I seemed a rather unusual student, when I showed up for the next school term with two secretaries and a personal assistant!

In Islamic thought and practice, the world of the spirit and the world of daily life are inseparably intertwined. This is why, over a half century, my role as a spiritual leader has also required me to act in a host of social, economic and cultural endeavours, in order to secure and enhance the well being of the Ismailis and the communities amongst which they live. The Aga Khan Development Network has grown out of those efforts, and I am happy to say, the size of its staff has also grown just a bit since my undergraduate days!

In all of these endeavours, we have developed wonderful partnerships with many institutions around the world. And many of our most effective partners have come from this country.

These partnerships have involved many collaborators - governmental and private, academic and charitable, non-profit and commercial, religious and secular, national and international - providing not only financial resources but also human resources and intellectual capital. London has also been an important base for our work with Governments around Europe, and with the European Union itself.

Many of our partners - from the UK and other parts of Europe - are represented here tonight. We have been fortunate in these relationships, and I would like to express my deep gratitude to all those who have made them possible.

Our spirit of partnership here has deep roots. Over a century ago, my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, worked closely with Her Majesty Queen Victoria and her governments in the pursuit of common ideals. These ties were further strengthened by the strong presence of the Ismaili community - initially in places which later became Commonwealth countries, and later, here in the United Kingdom.

Many of the developing countries in which Ismailis lived were just coming into independent nationhood when I took office fifty years ago. Since that time, my attention has been focused on their challenges. My goal has been to improve the quality of life and to build new opportunity for Ismailis and the peoples amongst whom they live, while strongly supporting their pluralism and diversity.

The approach we take in the Aga Khan Development Network is non-denominational and holistic. It encompasses both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. We seek to catalyze the creation of necessary basic infrastructure, together with the provision of good quality

education and healthcare. We are concerned with ensuring access to appropriate credit for the poor at the same time as we are working to sustain the arts and culture.

It is particularly in the field of rural development in East Africa, South East Asia and Central Asia that we have established long standing and successful programmes with the Department for International Development. This has been born of a common philosophy and approach, and has resulted in an improvement in the quality of life for tens of millions of people in some of the poorest regions in the world.

It is striking to me that in 1957, there were only about 100 Ismaili residents in this country, and most of them were students. Today, there are fourteen thousand Ismailis permanently living here and of all ages and walks of life.

Our story in this country is a case study in the settlement of an immigrant community - one which originated from East Africa, the Indian subcontinent and now Central Asia. Upheavals in their native lands - wars of independence, civil wars, collapsed economies and other dislocations affected the Ismailis and millions of others around them. Today almost one third of my community in this country have been born in the United Kingdom. They have maintained their religious and cultural identity and they are well integrated into their local environment. It is a community in which over 90 per cent of the university age population participate in tertiary education. The average household income is a third higher than the national average - although I say this with some trepidation as I hope we are not being overheard by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs!

Britain has been an enabling environment. As a result, the community is now making a meaningful contribution to the economy and civic society, whilst also providing a resource to support initiatives in other parts of the world.

In 1957, there was only one Ismaili space here for congregational prayer - and that was on leased premises! Creating places of prayer as centres for community life was fundamental to ensuring the cohesion of the community, and there are now over 40 such places. Among them, of course, a central focal point is The Ismaili Centre, located in South Kensington. Having Baroness Thatcher with us tonight is particularly significant because The Ismaili Centre was opened by her in 1985.

Like other Ismaili Centres around the world, the London Centre serves not only as a gathering place for Ismailis, but as an active participant in local society, sponsoring a variety of cultural initiatives - exhibitions, lectures and other public events. These efforts reflect our pride in our heritage and our eagerness to share it with others.

We have also, in these recent decades, established two new institutions of higher learning here, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, and The Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations, which is part of the Aga Khan University. They both offer Masters level teaching programmes, they engage in research and publication, and they also develop curriculum materials for children in primary and secondary schools. In all these efforts, they take a holistic, civilizational approach to Islamic studies, rather than emphasizing the more narrow domain of theological dialectic.

What some describe as a clash of civilizations in our modern world is, in my view, a clash of ignorances. This is why education about religious and cultural heritage is so critically important—and why we will continue to invest in these institutions. We deeply believe that scholarship, publication and instruction—of high quality and generous breadth-- can provide important pathways toward a more pluralistic and peaceful world.

All of these comments, then, speak to the context in which we gather tonight-- a rich history of partnership reaching deeply into the past - and extending, we hope and trust, into an even more productive future.

Thank you very much.

**Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan à l'occasion de son installation en tant que membre associé étranger de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts au fauteuil de Kenzo Tange à l'Institut de France (Paris, France) - 18 June 2008**

Madame le Représentant du Président de la République,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,  
M. le Président,  
M. le Premier Ministre,  
Messieurs les Maires,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Présidents et Directeurs,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Conseillers,  
Monsieur le Chancelier, Madame et Messieurs les Secrétaires Perpétuels,  
Messieurs les Présidents,  
Mes chers Confrères,  
Mesdames, Messieurs,

Alfred de Vigny écrivait dans son Journal d'un poète, que l'honneur c'est la poésie du devoir.

L'honneur, mes chers Confrères, puisque j'ai la joie de pouvoir vous appeler ainsi, cet honneur que vous me faites de rejoindre votre compagnie dans cette auguste maison, je le ressens comme un immense bonheur et, effectivement, comme un grand devoir :

un devoir envers vous-même ;

un devoir vis-à-vis de Kenzo TANGE ;

un devoir enfin envers ceux qui nous suivront.

L'histoire de ma famille est celle d'une transmission ininterrompue à travers le temps de valeurs non seulement religieuses mais également culturelles, depuis un événement fondateur qui remonte à presque quatorze siècles. Vous comprendrez dès lors que je me sente intellectuellement et affectivement proche de cette admirable tradition de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts : par l'éloge de celui qui est parti, celui qui est admis contribue à transmettre aux générations futures un peu de celui qui n'est plus.

C'est donc avec le plus grand respect que je vais m'incliner devant Kenzo TANGE que vous avez admis en votre sein il y a quelques années.

J'ai cherché à comprendre ce qui conduisit Kenzo TANGE sous cette coupole. Le jury du Prix Prizker d'architecture, lors de son attribution à Kenzo TANGE en 1987, alors qu'il avait 74 ans, avait dit de lui :

Kenzo TANGE "parvient à des formes qui élèvent nos cœurs parce qu'elles émergent d'un passé ancien dont nous avons à peine la réminiscence, et pourtant, elles nous coupent le souffle par leur contemporanéité".

Cette émergence du passé, Kenzo TANGE voulait la maîtriser afin qu'elle facilite l'épanouissement des formes nouvelles, mais sans la laisser disparaître.

Il avait résumé ainsi sa pensée sur ce point :

"Le rôle de la tradition est celui d'un catalyseur, qui permet la réaction chimique, mais qui n'est plus détectable dans le résultat final. La tradition peut bien sûr être en œuvre dans une création, mais elle ne peut plus être création elle-même."

Ce que le présent doit prendre au passé dans l'élaboration de l'avenir est objet de réflexion pour tout architecte. Plus généralement, ce doit être une interrogation permanente pour toute personne qui porte une responsabilité dans le domaine de l'habitat, dans toutes les civilisations et sous tous les cieux.

Pour tenter de comprendre les conditions dans lesquelles Kenzo TANGE a apporté sa contribution à cette réflexion, il est nécessaire de se reporter au début du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

Nous sommes en 1913, l'année qui suit l'avènement de l'Empereur Yoshihito et le début de l'ère Taisho, sur l'île de Shikoku au Sud du Japon. Kenzo TANGE est en effet né là, à Imabari, petit village côtier qui s'ouvre sur des bras de mer reliant la mer intérieure et le large. Hiroshima se trouve à 60 kilomètres d'Imabari au nord-ouest, sur l'autre rive de cette voie marine.

L'ère Taisho est une ère d'ouverture, souhaitée et voulue, vers l'Occident. Elle s'opposera à la période de l'immédiat après guerre, où la réception des valeurs américaines fut pour une bonne part contrainte.

Kenzo TANGE naît donc dans un pays en mutation. Cela explique peut-être pourquoi un autre architecte japonais, un peu plus âgé que le jeune Kenzo, Kunio Maekawa, part à Paris en 1928 pour faire ses armes avec Le Corbusier.

C'est là que beaucoup de choses se nouent. En effet, Kenzo TANGE, après avoir obtenu son diplôme d'architecture de l'université de Tokyo en 1938, travaillera jusqu'en 1941 pour Kunio Maekawa.

Pendant qu'il se forme auprès de lui, Kenzo TANGE revient à l'université de Tokyo pour étudier l'urbanisme. C'est là qu'il fondera le 'Laboratoire Tange' dans le cadre duquel il conseillera de jeunes architectes dont Sachio Otani, Takashi Asada, Taneo Oki, Kisho Kurokawa, Arata Isozaki et Fumihiko Maki. Les deux derniers me sont bien connus. Arata Isozaki est l'architecte choisi par l'Université d'Asie Centrale, dont je suis le chancelier, pour construire les trois campus du Tadjikistan, du Kirghizstan et du Kazakhstan. Quant à Fumihiko Maki, il est le concepteur du Musée Aga Khan de Toronto et de la Délégation de l'Imamat ismaïli à Ottawa.

Au-delà de la formation universitaire et de ses premières expériences auprès de ses maîtres, on ne peut passer sous silence l'influence sur Kenzo TANGE du débat sur la "japonitude", néologisme dont on a désigné la querelle qui parcourut le Japon de 1920 à 1960. Il s'agissait non seulement de l'influence du passé sur le présent et l'avenir, mais, plus généralement, de la question de savoir si le Japon devait développer sa propre culture de la modernité, ou adopter le 'Style International' qui diffusait alors dans le monde, essentiellement à partir des Etats-Unis.

Mais revenons à Kenzo TANGE, qui est sur le point d'entrer dans la vie active.

—  
Il est diplômé.

Il a été formé par des maîtres prestigieux.

Il est pénétré de l'immense tradition japonaise et de modernisme occidental.

Tout se présente sous les meilleurs auspices : le jeune homme est prêt à voler de ses propres ailes.

Sa vie est cependant bouleversée par la guerre.

Kenzo TANGE tient cependant sa vie fermement en main et ses qualités vont, de fait, se déployer dans l'adversité. Il s'installe à son compte, est nommé en 1946 professeur assistant à l'université de Tokyo et, en 1947, membre de l'Agence pour la reconstruction du Japon.

C'est en ces qualités qu'il participe à très haut niveau à la renaissance de la ville d'Hiroshima, selon un concept moderne et aéré. Il signera à cette occasion de nombreux monuments qui entourent le Mémorial de la Paix, cette ruine d'un immeuble d'Hiroshima resté debout, célèbre dans le monde entier, et inscrit au Patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO en 1996.

C'est ainsi que Kenzo TANGE concevra et réalisera le Cénotaphe, le Musée mémorial de la Paix, la Flamme de la Paix et, plus récemment, le Mémorial national de la Paix pour les victimes de la bombe atomique.

Kenzo TANGE devient alors un architecte dont on célèbre les qualités.

1960 et 1970 sont des années qui marquent respectivement la World Design Conference de Tokyo et l'Exposition universelle d'Osaka. A cette époque, Kenzo TANGE est proche du mouvement dit 'métaboliste' animé par Kurokawa et Maki, ses élèves d'antan. Cette école s'est rendue célèbre par l'idée qu'il fallait privilégier les lois de l'espace pour réinventer celles qui, traditionnellement, s'appuyaient sur la forme et la fonction.

Kenzo TANGE fut considéré dans cet intervalle de temps, presque comme l'architecte en chef de cet Etat-maître-d'ouvrage, qui marquait alors fortement le Japon de son empreinte. Cette reconnaissance de fait lui permettra de concevoir des oeuvres considérables, en particulier son projet urbain pour Tokyo.

Cette dimension de Kenzo TANGE ne l'empêcha pas cependant de forger sa propre doctrine. Il déclara, ici même, avoir acquis assez tôt une certitude qui avait déterminé sa manière de penser l'architecture et l'urbanisme : il s'agissait du rapport entre espace et objets physiques, qu'il analysait ainsi :

"... l'espace urbain et architectural, auparavant ouvert, aéré, exerçait en fait une force d'attraction. J'avais de plus en plus le sentiment que les espaces que j'avais interprétés précédemment comme étant créés par l'écartement des objets physiques, exerçaient au contraire une force qui faisait adhérer ces objets. J'arrivais, peu à peu, à considérer l'espace comme une énergie d'adhérence réellement active."

La pureté et la profondeur de ce propos font mieux comprendre le sens de l'œuvre de Kenzo TANGE.

Il est difficile ici d'analyser individuellement ses œuvres. Je voudrais cependant distinguer le merveilleux Musée des arts asiatiques de Nice, quatre cubes dévolus aux civilisations chinoise, japonaise, cambodgienne et indienne, musée dont on peut dire pour reprendre une autre expression du grand architecte que c'est une "beauté qui convient", par opposition à la recherche de la nouveauté pour la nouveauté.

Au-delà du grand penseur des formes, Kenzo TANGE était un homme d'affaires parfaitement à son aise dans la vie du monde. Il ne redoutait pas la concurrence et adorait emporter des marchés devant ses confrères. Sa lutte confraternelle avec I. M. Pei sur plus de vingt ans était bien connue et la rumeur veut qu'il ait eu un immense fou rire quand il apprit que son immeuble de Singapour dépasserait en hauteur celui qu'avait conçu I. M. Pei dans cette même ville.

Kenzo TANGE fut aussi un enseignant admiré et recherché dans de nombreux grands pays, même si, vers la fin de sa carrière, il critiqua les tâches administratives qui lui incombaient et qui l'empêchaient de consacrer à ses étudiants tout le temps qu'il souhaitait.

Kenzo TANGE est ainsi l'homme accompli par excellence, un maître en sa profession et en son art.

Il laisse une œuvre immense, que l'on peut admirer dans le monde entier.

Il laisse des esprits bien formés.

Il laisse une conception du rapport entre la structure et l'espace.

Il a surtout identifié pour nous la nécessité de traiter ensemble, sans jamais les séparer, cinq thèmes centraux : l'architecture, l'urbanisme, l'éducation, la continuité culturelle et la technologie, courte liste dont la simplicité des termes dissimule l'importance fondamentale.

Nous nous souviendrons de lui.

Mon cheminement a été très différent en ce sens qu'il s'agissait d'autres cultures et d'autres régions du monde. Il fut cependant parallèle à bien des égards.

Lorsque j'ai succédé à mon grand-père, j'ai très vite réalisé l'immensité de ma responsabilité à l'égard des millions de membres de ma communauté, répartis en Asie, en Afrique et au Moyen Orient. J'ai constaté en particulier que l'amélioration de leur qualité de vie passait nécessairement par des progrès décisifs de l'habitat.

Après avoir observé le développement fulgurant, dans le monde entier, du Style International, question que j'évoquais tout à l'heure à propos du Japon, je me suis demandé s'il était souhaitable que le monde musulman suive cette voie.

La seule chose évidente était que la réponse ne l'était pas. A ma connaissance, personne ne s'était posé cette question et il était clair que je ne pouvais seul trouver la solution, même si je ressentais parfaitement que les identités culturelles musulmanes étaient fondamentalement en cause.

J'ai alors réuni des penseurs musulmans de toutes origines pour vérifier si mon interrogation était partagée et, dans l'affirmative, pour examiner l'opportunité d'agir ou, au



contraire, de laisser faire.

Des idées divergentes s'exprimèrent, certains estimant que la symbolique religieuse devait avoir la primauté dans l'expression architecturale, d'autres que l'architecte devait pouvoir s'exprimer sans être tenu à des références spirituelles, d'autres exprimant un arc-en-ciel de points de vues intermédiaires. Cependant, tous avaient conscience de l'existence d'une question sans réponse

Une parfaite unanimité s'exprima en revanche sur la nécessité d'agir par un vaste programme d'étude et d'analyse. Pour cette seconde étape, j'ai élargi le groupe d'origine à des personnalités venues de tous horizons : architectes, historiens d'art, sociologues, économistes, philosophes de toutes les écoles de pensée – croyants, athées ou agnostiques- et théologiens de toutes confessions.

Nous avons regardé.

Il faut imaginer un monde d'un milliard quatre cent millions de personnes ayant en commun une religion dont vous savez la complexité des courants qui la traversent.

Ces peuples sont distincts par l'histoire et les cultures ; par ordre alphabétique notamment : africaine, arabe, asiatique, perse et turque ; ils sont marqués en outre par ce que Montesquieu appelait la théorie des climats, les uns habitant les déserts les plus torrides, les autres les montagnes les plus hautes, les uns souffrant des inondations et les autres devant conserver précieusement chaque goutte d'eau, les uns riches et les autres affligés de la plus redoutable pauvreté.

Ces différences expliquent la diversité remarquable de l'habitat en pays musulman.

Elles n'expliquent pas cependant, dans des époques récentes, le désamour, voire le rejet, parfois la destruction inconsidérée de ce que fut ce passé, en grande partie aujourd'hui disparu.

Elles n'expliquent pas non plus pourquoi les architectes d'une culture musulmane donnée ignoraient les traditions d'architecture d'autres pays d'Islam.

Elles n'expliquent pas enfin pourquoi, jusqu'à la fin des années 1970, aucun architecte important d'un pays musulman n'avait été formé à nos traditions architecturales. Bien au contraire, les élèves architectes musulmans leur tournaient le dos et se formaient exclusivement en occident ; et puisque les écoles d'architecture de l'occident n'offraient aucune formation sur l'architecture d'inspiration musulmane, les jeunes diplômés ne pouvaient que reprendre, avec enthousiasme d'ailleurs, la culture de l'Ouest, ses goûts, ses matériaux et les formes adaptées aux climats des pays tempérés.

Au delà de la question de la formation des architectes, les maîtres d'ouvrages eux-mêmes étaient presque toujours inconscients des traditions architecturales de leurs pays, qu'il s'agisse de maîtres d'ouvrages publics ou privés. Il ne s'agissait en rien d'un réflexe de défiance vis-à-vis de ces traditions culturelles. Ce qui était recherché était sans le moindre doute une amélioration de la qualité de vie. Mais, à l'époque, personne n'avait conscience que ce progrès pouvait être obtenu par un ressourcement des traditions.

L'architecture n'était pas le seul Art touché par ce phénomène.

Un gouffre, le mot n'est pas trop fort, apparaissait entre les tenants du monde du passé, et ceux qui se tournaient vers l'avenir en se désintéressant du passé, cette tension exerçant une influence négative profonde sur les relations entre personnes, entre courants religieux et entre Etats. En quelque sorte, une version nouvelle de la querelle des anciens et des modernes qui fut débattue et qui s'apaisa dans l'enceinte de l'Académie française à la fin du XVIIème siècle.

Pour s'écarter de cette pente dangereuse, il nous a semblé qu'une re-connaissance du passé, dans tous les domaines de l'Art, devait permettre aux sociétés musulmanes de considérer leur pluralisme sous un nouveau jour : un pluralisme légitimé par l'histoire et la culture.

J'ai la conviction que cette acceptation revendiquée et fière de notre pluralisme, par effet d'entraînement, devrait contribuer à atténuer les tensions entre communautés musulmanes, mais aussi entre musulmans et non musulmans.

Les responsables politiques auxquels nous avons confié nos convictions, furent pour la plupart intéressés par le constat de rupture entre la tradition et l'avenir. Beaucoup exprimèrent cependant une certaine frustration. En effet, ils pouvaient légitimement nous dire : "Vous avez su faire l'état des lieux, mais que proposez vous pour sortir de l'impasse ?"

Nous nous sommes alors remis au travail. Pendant des années nous avons cherché, nous avons enquêté, nous avons réfléchi. Des intellectuels d'une vingtaine de pays d'Asie, des Amériques, d'Europe et du Moyen Orient nous ont apporté leurs contributions au cours de centaines de réunions, séminaires ou congrès, qui se sont tenus tout autour de la planète. Ces travaux ont fait l'objet de comptes-rendus, de publications, de thèses de doctorat et de cours universitaires. Ils ont été également à l'origine de notre implication directe dans la lutte contre la pauvreté dans les villes anciennes, au travers du Programme Aga Khan pour le soutien des Cités historiques.

Nous avons examiné des dizaines de sujets fondamentaux.

Quelques exemples : l'éducation architecturale dans le monde musulman, l'extension des métropoles, la métamorphose de l'urbanisme sous l'effet du développement, l'évolution de l'habitat rural, les agoras dans le monde musulman, la critique en architecture, la symbolique architecturale face à l'identité de l'individu, le régionalisme en architecture, ou encore l'acte de conservation du patrimoine comme clé de la survie culturelle.

Ce fut un processus ininterrompu sur plus de trente années. Un processus que nous voulons pérenne, afin de ne pas passer à côté de ce qui fut ignoré dans le passé : des choses toutes simples comme le fait que l'histoire avance, que les matériaux et les goûts évoluent et que les équations économiques et sociologiques se modifient constamment.

Cette démarche analytique a été suivie de synthèses.

Tout d'abord nous avons posé que la connaissance du passé était indispensable, quelle que puisse être son influence sur l'avenir. Nous avons en conséquence rassemblé une base de données très complète sur l'histoire de l'architecture dans les sociétés musulmanes, sans distinction de courants historiques ou religieux. Cette base est

accessible sur le site ArchNet au Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Nous avons aussi considéré qu'il fallait mettre en place des outils éducatifs ouvrant sur l'histoire de ces architectures. Il s'agissait en particulier de donner un accès à la symbolique traditionnelle, par exemple la symbolique de l'eau ou celle du jardin mystique. Je citerai ici le 'Programme Aga Khan d'architecture islamique, enseigné à Harvard et au Massachusetts Institute of Technology, ces universités où Kenzo TANGE enseigna. Des centaines d'étudiants sont titulaires de diplômes délivrés dans le cadre de ce programme.

Nos travaux m'ont également persuadé qu'au-delà de la connaissance du passé architectural, il était impératif de faire connaître les œuvres des architectes de notre temps et du futur, afin qu'elles puissent à leur tour être objet de fierté. De façon peut-être plus essentielle, je voulais que ces œuvres nouvelles prennent leur place dans la chaîne ressoudée qui relie le passé et l'avenir.

La gamme de ces œuvres nouvelles est vaste : restauration d'habitats anciens, extensions d'agglomérations, amélioration de la qualité de la vie dans les environnements ruraux. Mais aussi conception d'ensembles dont la notion même n'existait pas dans notre passé, par exemple les aéroports, les ensembles de bureaux, les centres commerciaux ou les hôpitaux multidisciplinaires. Tout ceci dans un monde marqué en profondeur par la révolution de l'informatique.

C'est ainsi qu'est né le Prix Aga Khan d'architecture. Je m'honore à cet égard d'avoir pu compter Kenzo TANGE parmi les membres du premier jury. J'ai été particulièrement heureux qu'il ait applaudi au fait que ce prix récompense non seulement les valeurs esthétiques mais aussi les valeurs sociales.

Les architectes français ont été à l'honneur. En effet, huit d'entre eux ont été distingués par les jurys du Prix. Dans l'ordre chronologique : André Ravereau, Serge Santelli, Michel Eccocharde, Paul Andreu, Jean Nouvel, Pierre Soria, Gilbert Lézénès et Marylaine Barret.

Les architectes qui ont puisé aux nouvelles sources de connaissances sur les cultures islamiques ont été à l'origine d'un cercle vertueux, les leçons tirées de leurs réalisations dans le monde rural et urbanisé enrichissant nos bases de connaissances.

Nous avons tiré des leçons importantes de ces réalisations :

Tout d'abord, nous avons constaté que pour avoir un effet sur une population importante, un projet de réhabilitation ou de reconstruction doit prendre en compte tout un quartier et non tel ou tel immeuble isolé, aussi important soit-il culturellement.

Nous avons été par ailleurs convaincus que le renouveau de l'habitat est en soi insuffisant, et qu'il doit se combiner avec une réhabilitation des espaces publics, des services médicaux et des écoles, et ce, en utilisant tous les outils modernes de financement, sans oublier le micro crédit et la micro assurance.

Ces réalisations nous ont enseigné également que l'action de réhabilitation ou de reconstruction d'un quartier constitue en soi une source de renouveau économique. Autrement dit, une population dont l'habitat a été amélioré régénère d'elle-même son environnement économique.

Enfin, nous avons fait le constat essentiel que le renouveau de l'habitat dans le cadre d'une approche culturelle ressourcée a des conséquences pérennes, au bénéfice en particulier des plus pauvres.

Vous aurez observé que les thèmes fondamentaux sur lesquels nous nous sommes interrogés, avons agi, et sur lesquels nous nous déterminons pour l'avenir, sont l'architecture, l'urbanisme, l'éducation, la continuité culturelle et la technologie, c'est-à-dire précisément les mêmes thèmes que ceux que Kenzo TANGE avait identifiés.

Ainsi, avec une chronologie décalée, avec des histoires et des géographies différentes, nous avons identifié séparément les mêmes axes fondamentaux, comme s'ils existaient de tout temps, en dehors de nous. C'est le mérite de Kenzo TANGE d'avoir discerné en premier l'importance de ne jamais les séparer.

---

Après vous avoir invité à me suivre loin de France, je voudrais y revenir pour vous dire que c'est avec cette expérience à l'esprit que j'ai évoqué la question si importante du devenir du Domaine de Chantilly avec le Gouvernement français, Monsieur Pierre Messmer, alors Chancelier de l'Institut de France, son successeur le Prince Gabriel de Broglie, Monsieur Eric Woerth, Ministre de la République et Maire de Chantilly et Jean-Luc Lagardère, président à l'époque de France Galop.

Le projet était très différent de ceux que j'ai connus précédemment puisqu'il est situé dans ce pays de France, l'un des plus développés au monde, cette France qui a réfléchi depuis des siècles aux rapports du passé avec le présent, notamment dans le domaine de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme.

Le respect de cet environnement français s'imposait donc à l'évidence, mais il devait à mon sens intégrer deux dimensions dont j'avais observé l'importance sous d'autres cieux :

Il fallait considérer le Domaine comme un ensemble. Ainsi, sauver le champs de courses seul n'aurait jamais pu, à mon avis, apporter la dimension nécessaire pour offrir une destinée renouvelée au Musée Condé, au Parc Le Nôtre et aux Grandes Ecuries.

Il fallait également, en donnant le temps au temps, créer les conditions pour que chaque partie prenante identifie les solutions économiques qui éviteront à l'avenir la remise en cause des efforts entrepris.

Mon vœu très cher est que l'on puisse dire dans quelques années que l'apport de cette expérience aura été utile.

Les initiatives que nous avons prises pour la réhabilitation de sites historiques dans le monde en développement nous ont démontré qu'un élément clé du succès est l'engagement, ensemble, de tous les partenaires, publics, privés, sociaux et culturels autour d'un projet commun. Le site de Chantilly est unique, mais sans le soutien de tous, rien n'aurait pu être entrepris. La France a fait encore une fois la démonstration qu'impossible n'est pas français.

Mes chers Confrères, voilà ce que je voulais vous dire de l'œuvre de Kenzo TANGE et de ma propre expérience.

Je souhaite que nos réflexions sur le passé, le présent et l'avenir, chacun avec ses responsabilités, chacun avec sa sensibilité, chacun avec son histoire, auront été utiles à ceux que nous avons voulu servir.

Je vous remercie.

## **Statement of His Highness at the Afghanistan Conference 12th June 2008, Paris**

Chairman  
President  
Secretary General  
Ministers for Foreign Affairs  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin by thanking President Sarkozy and his government for having hosted this conference at such a crucial moment. Much has already been done in Afghanistan over the last six years, but there are major challenges nonetheless to be picked up.

I would also like to commend President Karzai and his government for the implementation of the National Development Strategy, the ANDS. It is a major step forward towards a real change for the Afghan population. We now have the foundations for the reconstruction and we must build on these foundations and accelerate change.

There are tremendous hopes in terms of economic development, access to education, health, justice and rule of law. Afghans expect concrete results, tangible actions so that they can really believe there is a major credible change coming about in their quality of life.

By implementing the ANDS, development has to be seen as being fair and inclusive, reaching men and women even in the most isolated rural communities. And all of the ethnic groups have to be concerned. There is a veritable constitutional commitment.

The creation of a diverse, vibrant and sustainable civil society is critical in ensuring the success of democratic processes in Afghanistan. I call on everyone interested in strengthening the capacity and performance of civil society organisations and communities both rural and urban in Afghanistan.

Last year, together with the Government of Afghanistan, the World Bank, UNDP and ADB, we organised the Enabling Environment Conference in Kabul. The Conference defined a Road Map to create the conditions necessary to unleash the full potential of private initiative – business and civil society – in Afghanistan's development. All of us – government, the international community, civil society and the private sector – must redouble our efforts to build this enabling environment in Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, we have brought together the multiple capacities of the AKDN, through which we combine activities in microfinance, health, education, culture and rural development. Our multi-faceted approach has contributed to a 74% decline in poppy cultivation in the north-east of the country, improving the quality of life of over one million people. I quote this figure not to be self-congratulatory but to substantiate that significant processes of change are feasible.

Since 2001 the Aga Khan Development Network (the AKDN) has been an active and committed partner in the development process. Our financial pledge of \$75 million in 2002 has been nearly doubled. In our roles as investor, financial backer and implementer, we have mobilised nearly 750 million dollars for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to our national and international partners, who have enabled us to achieve these results.

We are convinced for many years now that Afghanistan must be viewed in its regional context. We have systematically invested in the strengthening of regionalisation: four new bridges over the Pyanj linking from now on Tajik Badakhshan to Afghan Badakhshan. National programmes between Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, in the sectors of telecommunications, microcredit, health and education including the new regional university, "the University of Central Asia" bring together Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and

Kazakhstan and neighbouring countries who wish to unite around the development of high mountain societies; all are or could be regionalised.

The AKDN's commitment to Afghanistan is for the long-term. Today, we pledge \$100 million over the next five years, made available through AKDN's agencies for activities in alignment with the objectives of the ANDS and is inclusive of a contribution towards the elections in 2009 and 2010.

The effectiveness of Parliament is critical for a functioning democracy. To this end, we will set aside several million dollars for building the capacity and competence of Parliament in technical areas of governance and the legislative process.

I am pleased to announce that in conjunction with the Afghan and French authorities, particularly the French Agency for Development, the AKDN will invest 9 million euros towards the expansion of the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul. Under the auspices of the Aga Khan University this expansion will make it possible for the existing hospital facilities to become a major regional player in the field of tertiary level healthcare and in the training of nurses and doctors.

**Speech by Mawlana Hazar Imam  
At the Foundation Ceremony of Dhaka Jamatkhana  
Wednesday, 21 May 2008**

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Honourable Adviser for Foreign Affairs  
Honourable Adviser for Religious Affairs  
Excellencies  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

*As-Salaam-o-Alaikum*

It is a special pleasure to welcome this distinguished and diverse audience to this Foundation Ceremony, as we formally mark the beginning of a new Jamatkhana in Dhaka.

This is a day which has particular meaning, of course, for the Ismaili community in Bangladesh. But it is good to know that it also means so much to the whole of this city and this country. For we see this new addition to the Dhaka cityscape as a symbol of our continuing historic commitment to this country, and further reinforcement of the warm relations which the Ismaili people have enjoyed here.

We are honoured that all of you have taken time to share with us this moment of celebration and gratitude, of reflection and recommitment.

Let me try to convey, at the outset, a sense of the hopes and dreams which have inspired this effort. For we have a rather clear picture of what we would like this Jamatkhana to be. There will, of course, be facilities here for congregational gathering and for administrative functions. There will also be places for welcoming the larger community here at seminars, lectures, cultural and educational events and other programmes. But we also see the new Jamatkhana as a place which will make an important statement symbolizing an important message. We see it as a place of peace and tranquillity, filled with a spirit of humility and prayer. It will not be a place for conceit or self-satisfaction, but rather a place for search and enlightenment. It will be a place where men and women in this pluralist country can help strengthen those common bonds which reflect our common challenges and which will shape our common destiny.

Those bonds reach deep into the past. My own thoughts have frequently been drawn back to the past this year, as I mark the 50th anniversary of my own role as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. I have memories, even from when I was a very young man, of how my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, just after the partition, urged Ismailis in India to settle here in what was then called East Pakistan. In subsequent years, in the last decade of his life, he continued to urge our community to invest both time and treasure in the economic development of this region, including companies that would become among the major employers and exporters in Bangladesh. This commitment to Bangladesh has continued in more recent years, often channelled through the many activities of the Aga Khan Development Network. We are deeply grateful for the close, cooperative relationship which the Network enjoys with the government and the people of this country.

The Ismaili tradition looks upon a Jubilee anniversary as a good time to launch new projects. It was at the time of my grandfather's Platinum Jubilee — marking 70 years as Imam — that he opened a new jute mill here — a company which is still called the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills. Similarly, we have viewed this Golden Jubilee as an auspicious time for new beginnings, and that is why I have the pleasure this week of participating in two ceremonies of this sort: here at the site of the new Jamatkhana, and also at the nearby site of the new Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka.



The Jamatkhana and the Academy will serve complementary roles as they work to dispel ignorance, cultivate a cosmopolitan outlook and nourish the cause of peace and harmony among peoples and cultures, within this country and around the world.

I cannot think of a better way to celebrate this Golden Jubilee than by setting off in a formal way down the road that will see two beautiful new facilities rise up as a part of this city, dedicated to spiritual and educational pursuits — the life of the spirit and the life of the mind — commitments which grow fundamentally out of Islamic traditions, and which will be instrumental in the future development of this country. The story of development here in Bangladesh has been not been an easy one; complicated, as it has been, by natural disaster, acute human demographic density and political instability. We have been reminded, very sadly, just this past month of the devastating power of natural cataclysms, and of the importance of preventing, preparing for and recovering expeditiously from such disasters. This is another important cause in which our Network has shared a deep concern with the people and government of this country.

We should also keep in mind, however, that Bangladeshi progress has been marked by a number of solid developments. The world has admired the progress you have made in building up neighbourhood groups and a variety of other civil associations, in the way you have coped with difficult challenges and threats, by your progress in the pursuit of food and income security, and by your educational advances — especially for women, and by the pioneering example you have set in demonstrating the potential of microfinance as a building block of a vigorous civil society and as a stepping stone toward social inclusion for the very poor.

The world admires as well the openness with which the people and Government of Bangladesh have welcomed the expertise and co-operation of external partners, and your reciprocal effort to share your own development lessons with the rest of the world.

Bangladesh has made a courageous commitment through the years to values which have grown out of Islamic traditions, but which are of universal applicability: a dedication to human dignity; to taking and giving the hand of friendship; to humility in the all-enveloping Divine presence which impels one to celebrate God-given differences rather than denigrating them; and to the persistence of hope, and to the resilience which hope bestows.

The Jamatkhana to be constructed here will express these same values, representing Ismaili identity to be sure, but doing so as a statement not of separation but of convergence and connectivity.

These remarks would not be complete without paying a special tribute — in your presence — to all of those who have contributed to the creation of this project and who will be involved now as this work goes forward. We thank the members of the community who have helped to lead this effort, as well as the donors, architects, and official bodies who have helped in launching this project. Their vision has been matched by their energy, their sense of commitment has been matched by their abilities. We salute them for what they have done, and we wish them much success as they continue now to turn their vision into reality.

I look forward to returning here again to see this Jamatkhana when it is completed. And I know that we will all look back on this day in years to come as a very happy beginning.

I extend to you all my thanks again for sharing in this special day with us.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the Foundation Stone-Laying Ceremony of The Aga Khan Academy,  
Dhaka, Bangladesh, 20 May 2008**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Honourable Adviser for Education  
Honourable Advisers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
As-Salam-olai-kum

My warmest thanks to all of you who have joined in this celebration - representing so well the diverse and impressive accomplishments of this country. You honour us by being here.

Our immediate purpose today is to lay the Foundation Stone of the Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka. It is a day we hope to look back upon with joy and satisfaction for many years to come. And, if our work is done well, it is a day that future generations will also look back upon as a great beginning.

As you have heard, this new Academy will be an important node in a network of 18 schools throughout the developing world, providing world class education for young men and women from all backgrounds, irrespective of ability to pay. It will be a remarkable place to go to school.

But our commitment to this institution is not simply a matter of creating beautiful, modern facilities for some 700 to 1200 deserving students or developing a corps of several dozen gifted teachers. It is also about creating a new national asset for the whole of this country - and for its broad educational community. This work will be done through an ambitious programme of professional teacher development, attracting talented candidates, sharing best practices, developing curricular innovations, and engaging in the most current training at the Academy's Professional Development Centre.

We could say a lot more about this new Academy. But I thought I might, instead, take a few minutes to describe what I see as the larger significance of our Academies' initiatives. For underlying our dreams for this School is our commitment to principles which have even broader implications.

There are three such principles that I would like to mention.

The first is the centrality of quality education as an element in the Islamic tradition. It is appropriate that I highlight this matter today, for Bangladesh is the first Muslim country in which we have laid a new Academy foundation stone. It also seems appropriate to underscore the spiritual foundations of this work since this event is helping to mark my 50 th anniversary as the spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

World and faith are inseparable in Islam. Faith and learning are also profoundly interconnected. The Holy Qur'an sees the discovery of knowledge as a spiritual responsibility, enabling us to better understand and more ably serve God's creation.

Our traditional teachings remind us of our individual obligation to seek knowledge unto the ends of the earth - and of our social obligation to honor and nurture the full potential of every human life.

The creation of a new Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka thus grows out of rich Islamic precedents.

The second point I would emphasize today is that our Academy initiative - in Dhaka and elsewhere - is one that strongly affirms the integrity of local and national cultures.

To be sure, this new Academy will connect its students to global perspectives. But it will also respect the central role of each person's particular heritage as a cornerstone of his or her identity and an enriching gift of the Creator.

The beauty of Creation is a function of its variety. A fully homogenized world would be far less attractive and interesting. The roots we inherit from our history – linking us to a particular past – are a great source of strength and joy and inspiration. And a sound educational system should help nourish those roots.

That is why the Aga Khan Academies, wherever they exist, will follow a dual-language curriculum. They will teach in English in order to connect to global society. And they will also teach in the appropriate local language. Here in Dhaka that means teaching in both English and Bangla. Because they will be fluently bilingual, our students will be prepared to unlock the rich treasure chests of history and culture, art and music, religious and philosophical thought, which are integral to one's identity and one's values and which are such powerful elements here in Bangladesh.

My first two points of emphasis, then, concern the emergence of our Academies program from Islamic traditions, and its commitment to local and national values. My third point is somewhat different, but entirely consistent - the strong link which our Academies will provide to an increasingly globalized world.

I mentioned earlier the importance of affirming the local and the particular in the face of forces which would dilute our identity and homogenize our cultures. But I would also note the equally compelling importance of global partnership and universal understanding - in the face of forces that would dangerously fragment our world. In the process of nurturing a healthy sense of identity, we must resist the temptation to normalize any particular culture, to demonize "the other", and to turn healthy diversity into dangerous discord.

This is why the Academies' curricula, in addition to using English as a connecting language, will emphasize areas of focus such as comparative political systems, global economics, and global cultures, along with the importance of pluralism and a sound ethical foundation.

At the same time, we will provide thorough preparation in subjects such as science and mathematics, developing the habits of rigorous reasoning and searching inquiry. In addition, the Academies experience will be a holistic one, with a healthy program of extracurricular and athletic activities.

Let me reflect for a moment on the matter of ethics - and the importance of ethical commitments not only in government but throughout society. Competent civil society is a major contributor to development particularly where democracies are less well established, or where governmental efforts are inadequate. The absence of corruption or fraud in government is not enough. Fraud in medicine, fraud in education, fraud in financial services, fraud in property rights, fraud in the exercise of law enforcement or in the courts, are all risks which can have a dramatic impact on social progress. This is especially true in rural environments, where fraud is often neither reported nor corrected, but simply accepted as an inevitable condition of life.

This is why the serious and sustained ethical formation of students and teachers is an essential dimension of the Academies program.

In addition, as we educate for global citizenship, we will also integrate each local school with others in the network, sharing ideas and experiences, exchanging students and teachers, and affirming in the end that all graduates have achieved a globally relevant credential in the form of the International Baccalaureate diploma.

Those, then, are the basic concepts of our program. We believe that this undertaking can flourish particularly well in Bangladesh - where a proud sense of independent national destiny is so often combined with a generous spirit of international partnership. The appreciation here

for the institutions of civil society is another favorable factor - and so, may I add, is the impressive progress you have made in achieving gender parity in education.

In the final analysis, the Academies project will face an age-old challenge as it moves ahead - the challenge of balancing the universal and the particular - the global and the local - as influences in human life. It is a challenge which becomes more important with every passing year. It has been said that the most important fact about modern communication technology is that it "universalizes the particular and particularizes the universal"- which simply suggests that local and global experiences are increasingly intermixed.

Such an intermixture can give us the worst of both worlds - hostile, defensive localism on one side and a superficial homogenized mega-culture on the other. Or it can give us the best of both worlds - proud local identities living side by side with creative international cooperation. How this issue will be resolved will depend on whether we can educate future leaders, in Bangladesh and elsewhere, to live creatively in such a setting. Our new program of Aga Khan Academies is one response to that challenge.

We are very proud today formally to expand the Academies network to the country of Bangladesh. And we are very pleased and honoured that you have been able to join us in this moment of celebration and dedication.

Thank you.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan  
At The State Banquet,  
Dhaka, Bangladesh – 19 May 2008**

The Honourable Chief Adviser  
Honourable Advisers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

I am most grateful to the Chief Adviser for his very kind words, and for the extraordinary warmth of this welcome.

As you know, I am marking this year a half century as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. To celebrate this Golden Jubilee, I am visiting places which have had particular meaning for the Ismaili Community, for the Aga Khan Development Network, and for me personally, over the last 50 years. My visit to Bangladesh is an important part of that celebration.

When I inherited my office five decades ago from my Grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, I also inherited the special feeling he had for this part of the world. I remember in particular, his response to the partition of India, when he actively encouraged a large number of members of the Ismaili Community to settle in what was then East Pakistan. They found a warm welcome here, and were pleased to integrate fully into Bengali life.

It was on the occasion of my Grandfather's Platinum Jubilee - marking seventy years of his Imamate - that he first invested in what became a thriving jute mill industry here. The first of those companies continues to exist and is still called the "Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills."

The success of those early investments encouraged us to make Dhaka our headquarter city when we established the first venture capital and development corporation anywhere in Pakistan in 1966. It later became one of the largest employers and biggest exporters in the country.

Through all of these years, our investments were designed to foster strong, cooperative partnerships with local institutions - not only with governmental bodies but also with private industry, and with the organizations of civil society, a sector which Bangladesh has so constructively encouraged.

This spirit of partnership, in turn, has reflected the spirit of pluralism which also characterizes this society - the readiness of people to work creatively, side by side, with those who are different from them. This quality will also become increasingly important as technology advances in the years ahead, enabling people to travel and trade and talk more often with one another, across cultural and geographic borders.

Technology is also transforming our economic lives. Economic value is no longer tied to how much land one controls - or how many machines or factories one owns. Within our lifetimes, predominantly "Agricultural Societies" and "Industrial Societies" of the past have been joined - and sometimes supplanted - by what many call the "Knowledge Society," propelled by the digital revolution, and focusing on the creation and management of information.

In a Knowledge Society, the most productive investments we can make are investments in education. And education is another priority we share with the Bangladeshi people.

Education has always been a central theme in Islamic life- and in the life of my family, going back a thousand years, to my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt. My Grandfather built on this tradition by founding a network of some 300 educational institutions, including Aligarh University in India. And we renewed this commitment more recently through the founding of The Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

It seems appropriate therefore that one of my central purposes on this visit will be to lay the foundation stone for a new Aga Khan Academy here in Dhaka. This school will be one node in a network of eighteen high-quality schools located throughout the developing world, global

in outlook, but deeply rooted in the local culture, providing a world-class education for boys and girls of all backgrounds, independent of ability to pay. It will educate promising students and develop inspiring teachers. It will be a strong educational resource for the entire country.

As we look to the future of development in Bangladesh, it is important to be realistic about the challenges. But it also is important to remember the distance which has been traveled - and the building blocks which are already in place.

I think, for example, of the strides which have been made here in controlling population growth, developing export trade, establishing micro-credit programmes, improving early childhood care, extending education, especially for women, and fighting corruption - in addition to doubling per capita GDP over the past two decades. The challenge now is to make development both sustainable and equitable, so that it fairly benefits people of all classes, cultures and regions.

The Aga Khan Development Network's agenda for Bangladesh reflects your agenda. To achieve that agenda will require a continuing spirit of close partnership.

It is in the spirit of partnership, then, that I thank you again for what we have been able to do together in the past, while looking forward to the things we will be attempting together in the future.

I would like you to join me in a pray in wishing peace, success, happiness and unity for all the people of Bangladesh.

My warmest thanks again to all of you.

**Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan au Dîner Officiel offert par le Président de la République du Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso)  
26 Avril 2008**

Monsieur le Président de la République,  
Monsieur le Premier Ministre,  
Messieurs les Ministres,  
Excellences,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Tout d'abord, permettez-moi, Monsieur le Président, de vous remercier, ainsi que le gouvernement et la population du Burkina Faso pour l'accueil chaleureux et la généreuse hospitalité qui m'ont été réservés.

Merci également, Monsieur le Président, pour vos aimables paroles.

Les liens formels de l'Imamat avec l'Afrique de l'Ouest remontent aux années 1960 lorsque, tout jeune imam, j'ai eu l'occasion de visiter plusieurs pays de la région. A l'époque, ce pays s'appelait la Haute Volta.

Mais nos liens informels remontent à bien plus longtemps puisque les historiens parlent en effet d'échanges au 12ème siècle entre les érudits de l'Université de Sankoré à Tombouctou et ceux d'al-Azhar, l'institut universitaire fondé au Caire au début du 10ème siècle par mon ancêtre, l'imam-calife fatimide al-Muizz.

Donc Monsieur le Président, nos rapports sont très très anciens.

Et je suis heureux aujourd'hui de pouvoir vous remercier de nous avoir donné l'opportunité de contribuer au développement du Burkina Faso, de partager avec vous les espoirs du peuple burkinabé et de construire ensemble de nouvelles institutions, créer des nouvelles opportunités et chercher à élargir un espoir pour tous les citoyens du Burkina pour un avenir heureux et de bonne santé et de qualité.

J'aimerais profiter de cette occasion aussi pour louer le rôle fondamental que le Président Campaoré, en sage avisé, joue pour restaurer et maintenir la stabilité dans la sous région.

Les accords de Ouagadougou et ses efforts de médiation témoignent de son engagement envers les valeurs fondamentales de dialogue et de paix. Valeurs que nous partageons.

Je me réjouis de pouvoir continuer à travailler avec le gouvernement et le peuple du Burkina Faso pour qu'ensemble, nous puissions relever les défis du futur.

Merci.

## **Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan à l'Ouverture du Séminaire et de l'Exposition de l'AKAA sur les projets primés au Burkina Faso et en Afrique de l'Ouest (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso) - 26 April 2008**

Bismillah-hir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Messieurs les Ministres,  
Excellences Messieurs les Ambassadeurs et Représentants des Organisations Internationales,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

As-Salaam-o-Alaikum

Je suis profondément heureux que cette exposition puisse se tenir au Burkina Faso, parce que les projets burkinabés qui ont reçu le Prix Aga Khan d'Architecture, chacun individuellement et tous les trois ensemble, sont d'une importance capitale.

L'architecture est le seul art qui a un impact sur la qualité de vie des peuples et c'est la raison pour laquelle ce prix a été créé. L'un de ses objectifs est en effet d'avoir un impact positif non seulement sur la qualité de la profession elle-même, mais aussi sur la qualité de vie des communautés musulmanes auxquelles on a souhaité s'adresser.

Lorsque j'ai établi le Prix en 1977, et à de nombreuses reprises par la suite, un grand débat s'est déroulé au sein des organes du Prix, qu'il s'agisse du Jury ou des « Steering Committees », pour savoir si ce Prix pouvait être attribué à des projets de grande importance auxquels des architectes professionnels n'avaient jamais participé.

Il avait été constaté que la plus grande partie des populations musulmanes de notre planète vivaient dans des zones rurales et que la majorité de leur habitat était construit par les familles elles-mêmes ou par des bâtisseurs qui n'avaient reçu pour toute éducation que le passage d'un savoir-faire d'une génération à l'autre.

A la suite de ce constat, le « Steering Committee » et les jurys ont porté une attention toute particulière à l'habitat rural et à la question fondamentale de savoir comment sécuriser et améliorer cet habitat.

Pourquoi, j'utilise le mot « sécuriser » c'est parce que, par exemple, la majorité des musulmans de notre monde d'aujourd'hui vit dans la zone sismique la plus dangereuse de notre terre.

Je suis heureux que malgré les grandes difficultés à identifier des projets qui pouvaient être considérés comme étant exceptionnels et donc exemplaires dans un environnement rural, entre 1977 et 2008, le Prix ait néanmoins réussi à identifier et à primer des projets forts importants pour les populations rurales.

Trop souvent, je crois qu'on oublie qu'entre 70 et 80% de la population musulmane de ce monde vit dans des zones rurales.

Ces projets ont été très différents les uns des autres et les 3 lauréats du Burkina sont caractérisés par l'inspiration, l'imagination et l'engagement personnel d'architectes qui ont fait tout ce qui était nécessaire pour créer des projets simples, facilement constructibles en



zone rurale tout en utilisant des matériaux locaux donc faciles à reproduire dans des contextes similaires.

Le Projet du Marché Central de Koudougou a reçu le soutien de la « Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation »

Je suis extrêmement heureux de constater que, ces dernières années, d'autres organisations internationales offrant de l'aide au développement dans les zones rurales du monde musulman, s'appliquent, comme l'a fait cette organisation helvétique, à aller au-delà du simple fait de soutenir économiquement un projet significatif. Elles veillent en effet à ce que ces projets soient particulièrement adaptés aux cultures du monde islamique au point qu'au cours des cycles plus récents du Prix, nombre de ces projets ont été retenus comme des réalisations exceptionnelles méritant une reconnaissance à travers l'attribution du Prix Aga Khan.

Cette sensibilité culturelle est un facteur particulièrement important pour que l'insertion de ces projets modernes puisse se faire au mieux dans des environnements traditionnels en y apportant de nouvelles techniques, de nouvelles architectures et même de nouveaux symboles, sans s'engager pour autant dans une direction qui ferait que les communautés locales rejetteraient ces initiatives comme étant incompatibles avec leur histoire et leur culture. Je tiens donc à féliciter tout particulièrement la « Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation ».

L'amélioration de l'habitat rural est évidemment un objectif important dans le processus de développement, d'abord pour améliorer la qualité de vie des populations rurales qui sont souvent les populations les plus pauvres de ces pays. Mais il s'agit également de faire passer le message que premièrement, ces populations ne sont pas oubliées de ceux qui soutiennent le développement national dans leur pays et que deuxièmement, elles ne doivent pas obligatoirement s'urbaniser pour se construire un avenir stable et prometteur, à moyen et à long terme.

Le Prix Aga Khan d'Architecture a en effet pour objectif d'étudier, d'analyser et de comprendre les dynamiques du changement physique dans les sociétés où vivent les musulmans. Il aspire à influencer sur ces sociétés pour que les générations futures puissent créer, bâtir et vivre dans des environnements meilleurs tout en préservant une continuité culturelle dans leur environnement physique.

Le Burkina Faso a une longue histoire commune avec le Prix Aga Khan d'Architecture qui avait primé, en 1992, l'Institut Panafricain de Développement à Ouagadougou, en 2004, l'école primaire de Gando, et plus récemment, en 2007, le Marché Central de Koudougou.

Tous ces projets ont en commun une utilisation intelligente et innovatrice de technologies appropriées utilisant la terre comme matériau de construction. Il est essentiel de préserver tant ce savoir que l'utilisation de ce matériau traditionnel. Et c'est pourquoi je suis heureux de constater que ces technologies et ces traditions connaissent depuis vingt ans un renouveau dans ce pays et que les maîtres maçons, les architectes et les briquetiers du Burkina Faso exportent désormais leur savoir-faire à travers l'Afrique.

J'aimerais féliciter à nouveau les architectes, les autorités municipales, ainsi que les agences nationales et internationales impliqués dans ces projets qui sont présents ici aujourd'hui, pour leurs réalisations et pour la valeur exemplaire des solutions architecturales

adéquates et adaptées qu'ils ont mises en œuvre et qui ont contribué à l'amélioration de la qualité de vie des populations du Burkina Faso.

Je félicite tous ceux au Burkina Faso qui ont contribué à ces 3 victoires successives.

Bravo !

Merci.

**Discours prononcé par Son Altesse l'Aga Khan lors de la cérémonie annonçant la création d'un parc urbain à Bamako (Bamako, Mali)  
25 Avril 2008**

Bismillah-hir-Rahmanir-Rahim,

Son Excellence Monsieur le Président de la République,  
Monsieur le Premier Ministre,  
Messieurs les Ministres,  
Excellences, Messieurs les Représentants du corps diplomatique et des organisations internationales accréditées au Mali,  
Monsieur le Maire de Bamako,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Asalaam-o-aleikum,

Je voudrais tout d'abord remercier Son Excellence le Président de la République du Mali de l'accueil si chaleureux que le gouvernement et lui-même, personnellement, ont réservé à ma famille et à moi-même tout au long de cette visite particulièrement chaleureuse dans tous les sens du terme.

Je voudrais également remercier le Président d'avoir bien voulu sélectionner le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture pour un partenariat avec l'Etat afin de créer un projet tout à fait exceptionnel et de très grande envergure. Je voudrais dire combien nous sommes heureux et admirons le Président et le gouvernement d'avoir reconnu l'absence d'un poumon vert pour la population de Bamako. C'est une raison supplémentaire pour nous de vouloir participer à cette initiative totalement unique et essentielle.

Nous recherchons l'amélioration de l'environnement, nous recherchons la planification urbaine, le développement culturel et touristique et la revitalisation économique et sociale. Ce partenariat réunit le Ministère de la Culture, le Ministère de l'Environnement et de l'Assainissement et le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture, qui est l'agence culturelle du Réseau Aga Khan de développement.

Je pense qu'il est utile de vous dire ici ce qu'est le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture, parce que la question est souvent posée, et il est important de se souvenir d'abord que, sur le plan juridique, c'est une fondation. C'est à dire une entité à but non lucratif. Mais pourquoi l'appelons-nous « Trust » plutôt que fondation?

En Islam, il est dit qu'Allah nous rend responsables, durant notre vie, de la bonne gestion de Sa création : nous sommes effectivement les trustees et non pas les propriétaires de Sa création. C'est la raison pour laquelle j'ai voulu choisir le mot « Trust », parce que ce mot correspond le mieux à l'éthique de l'Islam et de l'individu face à la création d'Allah. Voilà donc la raison pour laquelle le Trust, tout en étant une fondation, s'appelle « Trust ».

Le deuxième commentaire que je voudrais faire est que, quand on a un projet unique comme celui-ci, on n'a pas le droit de se tromper. S'il est unique, il faut qu'il réponde aux besoins de tous les segments de la population et on ne peut pas se permettre une espèce de vanité intellectuelle en présumant que nous pouvons savoir quels sont tous les besoins des différents utilisateurs qui fréquenteront ce parc à l'avenir. Et je voudrais donc qu'il y ait, avant tout, une concertation extrêmement large de toute la population de Bamako, des clubs sportifs, des ONG, du corps diplomatique, des enseignants, des banquiers, de tous

ceux qui peuvent avoir intérêt à venir, un jour, dans le parc. Nous souhaitons connaître d'avance ce qu'ils souhaitent qu'on leur offre, pour que nous puissions construire le programme du parc à partir d'une connaissance réellement profonde et avec un consensus le plus large possible de la population de Bamako sur ce que nous devons faire.

Il existe au Mali un dicton qui met en garde ceux qui pourraient être trop présomptueux dans leurs ambitions. Et ce dicton dit ceci : « Celui qui veut enfiler un pantalon à un éléphant est très courageux, mais s'il n'y parvient pas, il lui reste un énorme problème ». Je m'engage à ne pas essayer d'enfiler de pantalons aux éléphants du zoo.

Le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture reste humble devant un projet d'une telle envergure. Mais nous avons quand même déjà réalisé un certain nombre de programmes significatifs comme le parc Al-Azhar au Caire, la restauration de Bagh-e Babur à Kabul, les jardins du mausolée de Humayun à Delhi ; nous participons actuellement à la construction de deux parcs, l'un à Khorog au Tajikistan et l'autre à Zanzibar. Deux nouveaux parcs sont également à l'étude à Alep en Syrie et à Nairobi au Kenya. Et pour éviter de devenir tailleurs pour éléphants, je voudrais vous dire que tous ces parcs sont différents les uns des autres, et nous ne sommes donc pas du tout présomptueux devant ce projet unique à Bamako.

Pour ce qui est de ce parc de Bamako, je souhaiterais que l'on puisse développer le plus large éventail possible d'activités et accueillir toutes les composantes du public, et notamment les jeunes. Mais pas seulement les jeunes qui viendraient une fois : pour nous, le succès ce serait que les utilisateurs du parc reviennent et reviennent encore et que ce parc fasse partie de leur vie quotidienne à Bamako. Je dirais aussi que ce genre d'initiative doit être développée avec prudence, non seulement en écoutant tout le public mais en sachant également que le public change d'avis d'une décennie à l'autre. Et il faut donc que nous gardions un espace de flexibilité dans ce parc pour pouvoir ajouter des composantes nouvelles au fur et à mesure que les choses évoluent dans le temps.

Et pour finir, je voudrais dire que ni l'Etat, ni le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture ne souhaitent s'engager dans une initiative extrêmement importante et pluridimensionnelle qui risque de devenir un consommateur sans fin de ressources financières. Le programme sur le site cherchera donc à se développer de manière à atteindre l'équilibre financier dans un laps de temps raisonnable. Et le jour où cette initiative créera des ressources supplémentaires, ces surplus seront réinvestis dans le parc pour qu'il puisse s'améliorer avec les années.

Je termine ce bref commentaire en remerciant le Président, la ville, le gouvernement et le Ministre de la Culture, de nous avoir invités à participer à cette initiative merveilleuse. Et j'espère que nous pourrons mettre en place cette nouvelle institution avec succès, et donner à tous ceux qui vivent à Bamako, une nouvelle raison d'apprécier la qualité de vie dans leur ville. Merci.

**Speech delivered by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the ceremony of inauguration of the Great Mosque of Mopti  
24 April 2008**

Bismillah-hir-Rahmanir-Rahim  
Mr President,  
Ministers,  
Regional Governor,  
Mr Mayor,  
Village chiefs and dignitaries of Komoguel, Imam of the Mosque  
Honoured guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Asalaam-o-aleikum

Today I am pleased to be able to inaugurate the newly-restored Great Mosque of Mopti, also known as Komoguel Mosque, and to later visit the various projects currently underway to improve the environment in the historic district of Komoguel.

I should like to extend special thanks to the President of the Republic and the Minister for Territorial Administration and Local Community Affairs for their presence here today and for the support given by the government, regional authorities, the Mayor, Mr Oumar Bathily, the town council, and the Komoguel Local Development Committee to this project.

The significance of this project extends far beyond the physical restoration of the architectural structure of the mosque.

The history of the Ummah has reason to remember the prestige and influence of Mali 's great mosques. At the height of the empire, in the eighth century, it was from these great seats of learning, these veritable centres of intellectual and spiritual activity, that Islam spread across Africa . It is therefore an immense privilege for me to be able to restore these magnificent mosques. Here in Mopti, and in Djenné or Timbuktu, the great tradition of mud brick building has been revived and the skills acquired can henceforth be put into practice in the construction of all mud brick buildings, whether intended for religious or secular purposes.

The work of revitalising the mosques is gradually being extended to their surrounding neighbourhoods to include all residential accommodation situated in the shadow of the minarets. How wonderfully symbolic it is that the outcome of efforts to restore the mosques should be to improve the quality of life of the people whose lives follow the same rhythm as theirs!

The restoration of the Great Mosque of Mopti is the result of close collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the National Cultural Heritage Department (DNPC), the regional and local authorities, the Mosque Committee and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and of the dedication of numerous professionals and craftspeople from architects and conservation experts to stone masons, bricklayers, plasterers, metal workers, potters and electricians.

This project has made it possible to combine modern heritage conservation techniques with the processes and materials traditionally employed in the construction of mud brick buildings. The participation in the project of the few stone masons who still practice banco pourri has meant that more than 30 young people have been trained in this traditional technique, thus ensuring that is handed down to the next generation.

This is especially relevant in Mali where there is a danger that traditional artisans will gradually disappear, taking with them the skills and knowledge accumulated by previous generations of builders. Hence, restoring this important monument has provided the opportunity to perpetuate a tradition and also to ensure the future conservation of built heritage with appropriate techniques, competently applied.

Many other buildings and villages constructed out of mud which may be less visible but are nonetheless significant in the context of the region are awaiting inspection and urgent

protection and will require considerable cooperation on the part of national institutions and international organisations. It is encouraging to know that Mali has been selected to host this year's international Terra conference on mud brick architecture. In the next few years, the AKTC plans to contribute to this international effort, not only by restoring important buildings but also, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, by setting up a national list of mud brick structures, a move that is becoming increasingly urgent in view of the increasing deterioration of the country's mud brick architectural heritage and the dangers it faces.

In parallel to the restoration of the Great Mosque, the Trust has, in collaboration with Mopti's local community and other AKDN agencies, launched a pilot project to improve the quality of life of people living in the immediate neighbourhoods, by responding to some of their most pressing needs. The AKTC's initial commitment is to improve access to water and to an upgraded sewage network and to put in place social development, vocational training and micro-finance projects.

While these environmental management programmes centering on the mosques are designed to ensure that the whole population will benefit from an improved quality of life, the work nevertheless forms part of a more global vision of urban development.

Indeed, my fear is that urban modernisation will lead to an increase in property speculation and the uncontrolled development of tourist infrastructures which will eventually swallow up the mosques within the urban fabric. Sadly, we see that in many large Muslim cities, the minarets of our mosques, those towering symbols of our faith from the top of which the call to prayer rings out, are lost amid blocks of local authority housing, drowned out by the hubbub of the city.

My hope is that the regeneration of the areas around the mosques will mean the preservation and protection of the heritage of our glorious past which deserves our respect and admiration.

And it is our duty as Muslims to contribute to and to encourage this effort, as the Holy Qu'ran reminds us by commanding us to leave the world in a better condition than that in which we received it, and instructing us to help one another in the performance of good works.  
Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan following the Presentation of the Title of Honorary Citizen of the Islamic Community of Timbuktu and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Sankoré (Timbuktu, Mali)  
24 April 2008**

Bismillah-ir-Rahmanir-Rahim  
Minister, General Kafougouna Koné,  
Regional Governor, Colonel Mamadou Togola,  
Mayor Ould Mahmoud,  
Imam ben Essayouti of the Djingareyber Mosque,  
Imams of the Sankoré and Sidi Yahya Mosques,  
Grand Qadi of Timbuktu,  
Honoured guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Asalaam-o-aleikum

Allow me first of all to thank Minister Koné, Mayor Said Ould Mahmoud, and Imam ben Essayouti for their very kind words.

I should also like to express my thanks to the alumni, students and scholars of Timbuktu for presenting me with these honours. I am also grateful to the Governor and citizens of the city for the warm welcome extended to me and my family.

I have precious memories of my last visit to Timbuktu during which you presented me with the title of “Honorary Citizen” which I bear with very great pride. At the same time, I feel extremely humble, since there can be no greater honour than to be accorded citizenship of a city that has always been renowned for its dedication to the quest for knowledge.

Amid such a worthy and learned gathering I am reminded of the verses of the Holy Qur’an in which Allah reminds us that He gives the blessing of wisdom to whoever He wills, but only those with intelligence remember that He has done so.

My most sincere prayer is that I, my fellow citizens of Timbuktu and my brothers and sisters in Islam can continue our journey to bring greater wisdom and understanding to all.

For a thousand years, Timbuktu has been a town noted for its hospitality. Here, the desert and the River Niger converge and travellers arriving from across the Sahara have found a friendly welcome and an environment of knowledge and profound faith, as well as a cosmopolitan culture.

Today, I feel honoured and proud to belong to this town which has made a lasting contribution to the enrichment of Islam and world civilisation, not only through its scholarship but also in its role as a crossroads where rich cultural and commercial exchanges between Africa, Europe and Asia which have taken place.

I am also very happy to accept the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa from the prestigious University of Sankoré, the African continent’s most ancient higher education institution. Like Djingareyber and Sidi Yahya, this university has been the alma mater of the town’s 180 Qu’ranic schools and the birthplace of the many scholarly works which became uniquely influential in Africa during the Middle Ages. The sum of all that knowledge has been preserved in the richly-stocked libraries of Timbuktu which house thousands of manuscripts, most of them written by scholars born in the town. This tradition of learning and the

transmission of knowledge is at the heart of Islam and the practice of the faith.

I am delighted to receive this degree in such a prestigious centre of Islamic erudition, facing the historic Djingareyber Mosque built in the 14th century in the reign of Emperor Mansa Kankou Moussa by the architect Abu Ishaq as-Saheli.

This mosque is the oldest and most typical example of a unique style of earth architecture developed in the very earliest years of Islam in West Africa and which survives to this day. Today, however, the process of rapid change means that the region is threatened with the loss of technical expertise and the disappearance of the traditional banco technique. That is why the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and Mali's Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the mosque's governing body, have launched this heritage conservation programme with the aim of reviving traditional construction techniques, improving the state of preservation of the buildings, and ensuring their long-term maintenance so that they can be passed on to future generations.

I shall always remember this honorary doctorate as proof of the harmony between intellect and faith which is Islam's blessing to Muslims.

Thank you.



**Discours de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan au Dîner officiel offert par le Président de la République du Mali (Bamako, Mali)  
23 Avril 2008**

Excellence Monsieur le Président de la République,  
Excellence Monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée Nationale,  
Monsieur le Premier Ministre,  
Messieurs les Ministres,  
Excellences Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Permettez-moi tout d'abord de remercier le Président, le gouvernement et la population du Mali pour l'accueil chaleureux que vous m'avez réservé et pour la généreuse hospitalité que vous me témoignez.

Permettez-moi aussi, Monsieur le Président, de vous dire à quel point je suis touché et honoré d'être élevé à la dignité de Grand Croix de l'Ordre National du Mali. Le fait de recevoir la plus haute distinction de la République du Mali et d'entendre vos mots si aimables et si élogieux, est pour moi le témoignage de l'estime et de la considération du peuple du Mali et de vous-même. Sachez, Monsieur le Président, que cette estime et cette considération sont partagés et reflètent les liens qui nous unissent depuis bien longtemps.

Les liens formels de l'imamat avec l'Afrique de l'Ouest remontent ainsi aux années 1960 lorsque, tout jeune imam, j'ai eu l'occasion de visiter plusieurs pays de la région. Mais nos liens informels remontent à bien plus longtemps. Les historiens parlent en effet d'échanges au 12ème siècle entre les érudits de l'Université de Sankoré à Tombouctou et ceux d'al-Azhar, l'institut universitaire fondé au Caire au début du 10ème siècle par mon ancêtre, l'imam-calife fatimide al-Muizz.

Au cours de mes nombreux voyages dans la région durant les quarante dernières années, j'ai pu mesurer l'importance des projets qui contribuent de façon constructive au développement et ceci a conforté certaines de mes convictions.

Tout d'abord, les défis du développement offrent également la possibilité de créer des opportunités dans une partie du monde qui possède un riche patrimoine culturel.

Ensuite, que des partenariats avantageux entre le secteur public et le secteur privé peuvent renforcer la capacité de chacun à contribuer à l'amélioration de la qualité de vie et à redonner de l'espoir dans des environnements pauvres en ressources.

Enfin, qu'en renforçant les infrastructures, en introduisant des innovations et en facilitant les synergies entre les pays de la région, les fruits du développement peuvent avoir un impact plus large et plus profond sur les populations.

Je voudrais donc saisir cette opportunité pour féliciter le gouvernement du Mali pour l'engagement et la diligence avec lesquels, sous la direction clairvoyante de Votre Excellence, il encourage les partenariats et le recours à des approches innovatrices afin de répondre aux défis clés du développement.

Nous espérons, de répondre à la vision que nous avons partagée avec Votre Excellence, Monsieur le Président, lors de mon séjour au Mali en octobre 2003. A cet égard, permettez-moi, Votre Excellence, de vous exprimer mon admiration pour l'ambition que votre gouvernement et vous-même affichez pour le pays à travers la mise en œuvre du

Programme de développement économique et social (PDES). Cet engagement courageux et déterminé, qui accompagne les efforts de la société civile, contribuera, j'en suis sûr, à permettre à la population du Mali de progresser et d'atteindre une meilleure qualité de vie.

Pour ce qui est de l'avenir, j'entrevois des possibilités accrues de moderniser les infrastructures d'éducation et d'améliorer la qualité de l'environnement rural pour lutter contre les problèmes préoccupants de l'urbanisation qui surgissent sous la pression démographique à travers toute l'Afrique et particulièrement dans la sous région.

Je voudrais vous assurer ce soir que mon objectif est de pouvoir continuer à travailler avec le gouvernement et le peuple du Mali pour qu'ensemble, nous puissions relever les défis du futur.

Merci.

**"Global Education and the Developing World"**  
**"The Peterson Lecture" by His Highness the Aga Khan to the Annual Meeting  
of the International Baccalaureate, marking its 40th Anniversary**  
**Atlanta, Georgia - April 18, 2008**

Dr. Monique Seefried, Chairman of the IB Board of Governors  
Members of the Board of Governors  
Mr. Jeffrey Beard, Director General of the IB  
Educators and Students from the IB Community  
Distinguished Guests

What a great privilege it is for me to be with you today - I have looked forward to this gathering for a long time. And I am particularly grateful to Monique Seefried for her generous introduction, and for so beautifully describing both the local and the global context in which we meet.

This is a particularly significant occasion for me, for several reasons.

It is significant of course because it marks the 40th anniversary of what I regard as one of the great seminal institutions of our era - the International Baccalaureate program. I say that because the IB program incarnates a powerful idea, the confidence that education can reshape the way in which the world thinks about itself.

I am deeply honored to be giving this particular Lecture - the Peterson Lecture, as it, too, has a great legacy. It fittingly celebrates the life and work of Alec Peterson, whose intellectual and moral leadership have been central to this organization and to all whom it has influenced.

I was humbled when I was first invited to be the Peterson Lecturer. That sense of deference grew, I must confess, as I began to look at the distinguished list of former Lecturers. And then I took one more step, and looked at what these people have said through the years - and I was even more deeply impressed by the responsibility of this assignment.

The Peterson Lectures - collected together - would make a wonderful reading list, for an excellent University course, on the topic of international education. After looking through them, I wondered if there was anything left to say on the subject! But if anyone should ever incorporate these lectures into a university syllabus, then perhaps my remarks today could appropriately be placed under the heading of "optional additional reading!"

Finally, this occasion has special meaning for me because it comes, as you may know, on my 50th anniversary as spiritual leader, or Imam, of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. We are thus celebrating both a fortieth and a fiftieth anniversary today - and both provide important opportunities to connect our past with our future, our roots with our dreams.

I came upon a rather striking surprise in looking through the texts of earlier Peterson Lectures. Not just one - but two of those addresses in recent years have quoted my grandfather! It was from him, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, that I inherited my present role in 1957. I also inherited from him a deep concern for the advancement of education - especially in the developing world. These two topics - education and development - have been at the heart of my own work over the past fifty years, and they will form the central theme of my comments today.

Very early after the end of the second world war, my brother and I were sent to school in Switzerland, Le Rosey, and after a few years at that school, a new coach for rowing became part of the school and we were told that he would also coach the ice hockey team during the winter term. His name was Vaclav Rubik, not the one of Rubik's cube fame but rather, like the famous cube itself, a challenging influence. He was also one of the most talented and intelligent sportsmen that I have ever met. He was in the Czech national ice hockey team which has been one of the best in the world, and he was also in the national Eights and Fours without Coxswain. His wife was in the Czech national field hockey team. So Le Rosey was extremely fortunate to have two exceptional athletes available for coaching. But there was another dimension to Vaclav Rubik. He had a doctorate in Law, and he and his wife were

political refugees who had fled on foot all the way from Czechoslovakia to Switzerland. He was a charismatic individual, and after only a couple of years of training he succeeded in putting together an under-18 crew of Fours, which won just about every race it competed in, including the Swiss National Championship for all ages.

We used to spend long hours in buses driving from one rowing competition to another, and from one ice hockey match to another. I remember asking him what he intended to do, as I could not see a man of such quality remaining indefinitely as a sports coach in a small Swiss school. His answer was that he had applied for acceptance as a political refugee to the United States, and that as soon as he would be allowed to come here he would do so. I asked him how he would earn his living once he came to the United States, as I was certain that he would not want to continue his career as a sports coach, and his answer has remained in my mind ever since. He said, my wife and I fled from Czechoslovakia with nothing, other than the clothes on our back and the shoes on our feet, but I have had a good education and when I arrive in the United States, that is what will enable me to obtain the type of employment I would wish. Once he left Le Rosey, I somewhat lost touch with him, and the last thing I heard was that he had become a very senior executive in the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

The moral of the story is clear – you can have nothing in your pocket, and only the clothes and the shoes you wear, but if you have a well educated mind, you will be able to seize the opportunities life offers you, and start all over again.

I suspect that many members of the Ismaili Community, like other Asians who were expelled by Idi Amin from Uganda, and who made successful new lives in other parts of the world, would tell you the same story.

From its very beginnings, the International Baccalaureate Organization has understood this central truth. But as we move into a new century, I would like to combine my words of congratulation and commendation, with some words of inquiry and challenge.

What is the eventual place and purpose of the IB in developing societies - and in a Muslim context? What can those worlds contribute to the IB community? And how can institutions which are rooted in different cultural traditions best work together to bridge worlds that have too often been widely separated?

As a point of departure in addressing these questions, I would turn to those words from my Grandfather which were quoted in two earlier Peterson Lectures. He included them in a speech he gave as President of the League of Nations in Geneva some 70 years ago. They come originally from the Persian poet, Sadi, who wrote:

“The children of Adam, created of the self-same clay, are members of one body. When one member suffers, all members suffer, likewise. O Thou, who art indifferent to the suffering of the fellow, thou art unworthy to be called a man.”

You will readily understand why such words seem appropriate for a Peterson Lecture. They speak to the fundamental value of a universal human bond- a gift of the Creator - which both requires and validates our efforts to educate for global citizenship.

I would also like to quote an infinitely more powerful statement about the unity of mankind, because it comes directly from the Holy Quran, and which I would ask you to think about. The Holy Quran addresses itself not only to Muslims, but to the entirety of the human race, when it says:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from one single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.”

These words reflect a deeply spiritual insight - A Divine imperative if you will - which, in my view, should under gird our educational commitments. It is because we see humankind, despite our differences, as children of God and born from one soul, that we insist on reaching

beyond traditional boundaries as we deliberate, communicate, and educate internationally. The IB mission statement puts it extremely well: “to encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

The IB community has thought long and hard about what it means for students to become powerfully aware of a wider world - and to deal effectively with both its bewildering diversity and its increasing interdependence. The IB program has wrestled vigorously with one of the basic conundrums of the age - how to take account of two quite different challenges.

The first challenge is the fact that the world is increasingly a “single” place - a wondrous web of global interaction cutting across the lines of division and separation which have characterized most of its history. This accelerating wave of interdependence is something we first defined as “internationalization” when the IB program was launched 40 years ago. We refer to it now as “globalization.” It brings with it both myriad blessings and serious risks - not the least of which is the danger that globalization will become synonymous with homogenization.

Why would homogenization be such a danger? Because diversity and variety constitute one of the most beautiful gifts of the Creator, and because a deep commitment to our own particularity is part of what it means to be human. Yes, we need to establish connecting bonds across cultures, but each culture must also honour a special sense of self.

The downside of globalization is the threat it can present to cultural identities. But there is also a second great challenge which is intensifying in our world. In some ways it is the exact opposite of the globalizing impulse. I refer to a growing tendency toward fragmentation and confrontation among peoples. In a time of mounting insecurity, cultural pride can turn, too often, into an endeavour to normalise one's culture. The quest for identity can then become an exclusionary process - so that we define ourselves less by what we are FOR and more by whom we are AGAINST. When this happens, diversity turns quickly from a source of beauty to a cause of discord.

I believe that the coexistence of these two surging impulses - what one might call a new globalism on one hand and a new tribalism on the other - will be a central challenge for educational leaders in the years ahead. And this will be particularly true in the developing world with its kaleidoscope of different identities.

As you may know, the developing world has been at the centre of my thinking and my work throughout my lifetime. And I inherited a tradition of educational commitment from my grandfather. It was a century ago that he began to build a network of some 300 schools in the developing world the Aga Khan Education Services - in addition to founding Aligarh University in India.

The legacy which I am describing actually goes back more than a thousand years, to the time when our forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. For many centuries, a commitment to learning was a central element in far-flung Islamic cultures. That commitment has continued in my own Imamatus through the founding of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia and through the recent establishment of a new Aga Khan Academies Program.

And this is where your and our paths meet. As you have heard, the curriculum of our Academies is centered on the IB program. We hope that the network of Aga Khan Academies will become an effective bridge for extending the IB Program more widely into the developing world.

Each of you knows well the IB side of this bridge. I thought I might add just a few words about the Academies side of the bridge, and about my purpose in initiating this international network of high quality schools.

Our Academies Program is rooted in the conviction that effective indigenous leadership will be the key to progress in the developing world, and as the pace of change accelerates, it is clear that the human mind and heart will be the central factors in determining social wealth.

Yet in too much of the developing world, the capacity to realise the potential of the human resource base is still sadly limited. Too many of those who should be the leaders of tomorrow are being left behind today. And even those students who do manage to get a good education often pursue their dreams in far off places - and never go home again. The result is a widening gap between the leadership these communities need – and the leadership their educational systems deliver.

For much of human history, leaders have been born into their roles, or have fought their way in – or have bought their way in. But in this new century - a time of unusual danger and stirring promise, it is imperative that aristocracies of class give way to aristocracies of talent – or to use an even better term – to meritocracies. Is it not a fundamental concept of democracy itself, that leadership should be chosen on the basis of merit?

Educating for leadership must imply something more than the mere development of rote skills. Being proficient at rote skills is not the same thing as being educated. And training that develops skills, important as they may be, is a different thing from schooling in the art and the science of thinking.

The temptation to inculcate rather than to educate is understandably strong among long frustrated populations. In many such places, public emotions fluctuate between bitter impatience and indifferent skepticism - and neither impatience nor indifference are favorable atmospheres for encouraging reasoned thought.

But in an age of accelerating change, when even the most sophisticated skills are quickly outdated, we will find many allies in the developing world who are coming to understand that the most important skill anyone can learn is the ability to go on learning.

In a world of rapid change, an agile and adaptable mind, a pragmatic and cooperative temperament, a strong ethical orientation - these are increasingly the keys to effective leadership. And I would add to this list a capacity for intellectual humility which keeps one's mind constantly open to a variety of viewpoints and which welcomes pluralistic exchange.

These capacities, over the longer term, will be critically important to the developing world. They happen to be the same capacities which programs like the IB - and the Aga Khan Academies - are designed to elicit and inspire.

The Academies have a dual mission: to provide an outstanding education to exceptional students from diverse backgrounds, and to provide world-class training for a growing corps of inspiring teachers.

At these 18 Academies, each educating between 750 to 1200 primary and secondary students, we anticipate having one teacher for every seven students, and we will place enormous emphasis on recruiting, training, and compensating them well. We hope they will become effective role models for other teachers in their regions.

To this end, we expect within the next year or so to open new Professional Development Centres for teacher education in India, Bangladesh, Mozambique, and Madagascar. Similar planning is underway in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Tanzania and Uganda. These Professional Development Centres will operate before we open the doors to students.

In sum, our strategy begins with good teaching. We must first teach the teachers. As the Academies open, one-by-one, they will feature merit-based entry, residential campuses, and dual-language instruction. This language policy exemplifies our desire to square the particular with the global. English will enable graduates to participate fully on an international stage, while mother-tongue instruction will allow students to access the wisdom of their own cultures.

Squaring the particular with the global will require great care, wisdom, and even some practical field testing, to ensure that it really is possible to develop a curriculum that responds effectively to both the global and the tribal impulses. While this will be a feat in itself, it will also be important to relate well to highly practical concerns such as the nature of each country's national university entrance exams, and the human resources required by each country's multi-year development plans.

The Academies have given much thought to the components that we would describe as global in our curriculum. We intend to place special emphasis on the value of pluralism, the ethical dimensions of life, global economics, a broad study of world cultures (including Muslim Civilizations) and comparative political systems. Experienced IB teachers have already been helping us to integrate these important areas of focus into the Academies curriculum.

Many students will also study for at least a year in other parts of the Academy network, outside their home countries. And of course we have stipulated that our program should qualify our students for the International Baccalaureate diploma. Faculty too will have the opportunity to live in new countries, learn new languages and engage in new cultures.

You may be asking yourselves on what bases the Aga Khan Education Services and the Academies Program have selected new subjects to be added to the Academies curriculum, and I thought it might be useful to illustrate that to you.

With regard to pluralism, it has been our experience that in a very large number of countries in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in the Middle East, and elsewhere, the failure of different peoples to be able to live in peace amongst each other has been a major source of conflict. Experience tells us that people are not born with the innate ability nor the wish to see the Other as an equal individual in society. Pride in one's separate identity can be so strong that it obscures the intrinsic value of other identities. Pluralism is a value that must be taught.

With regard to the issue of ethics, we see competent civil society as a major contributor to development, particularly where democracies are weak, or where governments have become dysfunctional. We are therefore concerned with the quality of ethics in all components of civil society, and reject the notion that the absence of corruption or fraud in government is anywhere near sufficient, to ensure to every individual a rigorous and clean enabling environment. Fraud in medicine, fraud in education, fraud in financial services, fraud in property rights, fraud in the exercise of law enforcement or in the courts, are risks which have a dramatic effect on peoples' development. This is especially true in rural environments where the majority of the peoples of the developing world live, but where fraud is often neither reported nor corrected, but simply accepted as an inevitable condition of life.

Educating for global economics will also be essential to ensure that the failed economic systems of the past are replaced. But this must not mean a simplistic acceptance of the imbalances and inequities associated with today's new global economy. We need to develop a broad consensus which focuses on creating a global economic environment which is universally fair.

Our program will also teach about world cultures. Inter-cultural conflicts inevitably grow out of intercultural ignorance - and in combating ignorance we also reduce the risk of conflict.

Finally, we want to educate about comparative political systems, so that more and more people in the developing world will be able to make competent value judgements about their Constitutions, their political systems, and how they can best develop democratic approaches which are well tailored to their needs. Public referenda, to sanction new Constitutions, for example, make little sense when they call for judgments from people who do not understand the questions they are being asked, nor the alternatives they should be considering.

These planned subject areas share two characteristics: They all impact a large number of countries across the continents of our world, and they address problems that will take many decades to resolve. And, while the Academies have made reasonable progress in defining

the broad areas of the curriculum, I must be frank in saying that the more tribal subjects, specific to individual countries, or perhaps regions, are areas where a great deal of work remains to be done, and where in fact we should expect to go through a prudent step-by-step process - cutting the cloth as each individual situation requires.

What we hope to create, in sum, is a network of 18 educational laboratories, all of them sharing a common overriding purpose, but each one learning from the others particular experiences.

The first Aga Khan Academy opened in Kenya four years ago, and the first cohort of IB Diploma graduates completed their studies last June. The quality of their academic work, including their success on the IB examinations, along with their records of community service, make us optimistic about the future.

As we move into that future, we would like to collaborate with the International Baccalaureate movement in a challenging, but inspiring new educational adventure. Together, we can help reshape the very definition of a well educated global citizen. And we can begin that process by bridging the learning gap which lies at the heart of what some have called a Clash of Civilizations, but which I have always felt was rather a Clash of Ignorances.

In the years ahead, should we not expect a student at an IB school in Atlanta to know as much about Jomo Kenyatta or Muhammad Ali Jinnah as a student in Mombasa or Lahore knows about Atlanta's great son, the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.? Should a Bangladeshi IB student reading the poems of Tagore at the Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka not also encounter the works of other Nobel Laureates in Literature such as the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk or America's William Faulkner or Toni Morrison?

Should the study of medieval architecture not include both the Chartres Cathedral in France and the Mosque of Djenné in Mali? And shouldn't IB science students not learn about Ibn al-Haytham, the Muslim scholar who developed modern optics, as well as his predecessors Euclid and Ptolemy, whose ideas he challenged.

As we work together to bridge the gulf between East and West, between North and South, between developing and developed economies, between urban and rural settings, we will be redefining what it means to be well educated.

Balancing the universal and the particular is an age old challenge - intellectually and practically. But it may well become an even more difficult challenge as time moves on and the planet continues to shrink. It is one thing, after all, to talk about cultural understanding when "the Other" is living across the world. It is often a different matter when the "Other" is living across the street.

I admire the IB organization's desire to take on the cultural challenges of our time, to move into parts of the world and areas of society where it has been less active in the past. But we all should be clear, as we embark on such projects, that the people with whom we will be dealing will present different challenges than before. As we choose our targets of opportunity, we should examine the environments and consider carefully the changes which can make these programs most relevant to the future.

Some people tell us that globalization is an inevitable process. That may be true in certain areas of activity - but there is nothing inevitable about globalizing educational approaches and standards. Conceptualising a global examination system is one of the most difficult intellectual endeavours I can imagine - though it should also be one of the most exciting. The intellectual stimulation of working on such a project could keep the world's best educators engaged for decades. That task may be more feasible, however, because of the head start which the IB organization has already made in thinking about a global curriculum. Your IB experience, independent of the Aga Khan Academies, as well as your Peterson lectures through the years offer an excellent foundation for that process.



As the IB moves beyond the Judeo-Christian cultures where it is most experienced, it will have to make educators in other areas of the world into its newest stakeholders. This will probably mean developing more explicit expressions of a cosmopolitan ethic, founded if possible in universal human values. That may well be a progressive, ever evolving process - one that will be increasingly inclusive but may never be complete.

What would it mean for example for the IB program to work in largely rural societies -where there have never been the resources or incentives to support serious and sustained education? What would it mean to apply the concepts of critical thinking and individual judgment in societies which are steeped in habitual deference to age and authority, to rules and to rituals.

What would it require for an organization which is deeply rooted in the Western humanist tradition to speak with relevance in profoundly non-Western cultural settings? And how should we go about the challenges of moral education - growing out of universal values -in settings where religious and ideological loyalties are particularly intense.

I ask these questions not because I have ready answers to them - but because I think the posing of such questions will be essential to our progress. I ask them not to discourage you from reaching out - but rather to encourage you - as you do reach out - to do so with a full understanding of the risks and the strains that you will inevitably encounter.

I believe we can find answers to these questions. They may not be full and complete and perfect answers, but there at least will be initial answers, tentative answers, working answers. And each step along the way will teach us more. What is essential is that we search.

In the final analysis, the great problem of humankind in a global age will be to balance and reconcile the two impulses of which I have spoken: the quest for distinctive identity and the search for global coherence. What this challenge will ultimately require of us, is a deep sense of personal and intellectual humility, an understanding that diversity itself is a gift of the Divine, and that embracing diversity is a way to learn and to grow - not to dilute our identities but to enrich our self-knowledge.

What is required goes beyond mere tolerance or sympathy or sensitivity - emotions which can often be willed into existence by a generous soul. True cultural sensitivity is something far more rigorous, and even more intellectual than that. It implies a readiness to study and to learn across cultural barriers, an ability to see others as they see themselves. This is a challenging task, but if we do that, then we will discover that the universal and the particular can indeed be reconciled. As the Quran states: "God created male and female and made you into communities and tribes, so that you may know one another." (49.13) It is our differences that both define us and connect us.

I am confident that the IB program will continue to succeed as it extends its leadership into new arenas in the decades ahead. But as that happens, one key variable will be the spirit in which we approach these new engagements.

There will be a strong temptation for us to regard these new frontiers as places to which we can bring some special gift of accumulated knowledge and well seasoned wisdom. But I would caution against such an emphasis. The most important reason for us to embrace these new opportunities lies not so much in what we can bring to them as in what we can learn from them.

Thank you very much.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the  
Dinner hosted by the Governor and First Lady of Texas  
Austin, Texas - 12 April 2008**

Governor Perry and First Lady Anita Perry  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Governor Perry, you have been very generous in your remarks - even as you have been most gracious in your hospitality. We are deeply grateful for the warmth of the Texas welcome which you have extended to us. Of course we have known from previous experience about the wonders of Texas hospitality. As I am told one might say in Texas, "this is not our first rodeo". But I must also say that you have outdone yourselves today - and you have our deepest appreciation.

Of course, I know that Governor Perry is highly experienced as an official host - I understand you are about to become the longest serving governor in Texas history. And this accomplishment has only been the recent culmination of your long career in public service.

I am also looking back at a long career this year, as I mark my fiftieth anniversary as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. I have been celebrating this Golden Jubilee by visiting places which have been of particular importance to the Ismaili Community over the last half century.

As many of you know, I was studying in the United States when I succeeded my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, as Imam in 1957. My ties here thus go back to the very beginning of my Imamate.

It is fitting that the first stop on this current visit is in Texas. Of course, Texas is known around the world as a place which likes to be first and foremost in just about every area of accomplishment! So it should come as no surprise that for the Ismaili community - as for so many others - Texas is a place where superlatives apply.

Our community's life in the United States began only a few decades ago - as our people, like so many others, found here a welcoming land of opportunity. So many of them settled in Texas, in fact, that the Ismaili community here has recently been the fastest growing anywhere on earth.

At the heart of that growth of course, is the fact that Ismailis have felt so welcome here. And the critical reason for that compatibility, I believe, is captured in the word "opportunity". The American ethic and ideal - the Texan ethic and ideal - has always been one of openness to others and openness to the future. It is an ethic of opportunity, which the Ismaili Community deeply shares.

This commitment to opportunity is exemplified in the vitality of your diverse multi-ethnic society. It is rooted in a deep respect for the individual human being - independent of one's background or origins.

The Governor has cited words from the Quran about the affinity of our religious commitments. The teachings of the Quran, like those of the Bible, also resonate with the words that rang out from Philadelphia in 1776: affirming that "all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." Those words express our common ideal.

One of the purposes of my trip this week is to meet with the Ismaili community - all across this country. But another purpose is to meet with civic and government leaders, and to discuss ways in which the Ismaili Imamate, the institutions of our Community and the Aga Khan Development Network can partner with them even more effectively.

We would like to build, for example, on the encouraging start we have made, working with educational institutions here in Texas and elsewhere, to span the cultural gap which too often has separated the Islamic World from the West. As you may know, I see this problem not as a

clash of civilizations but rather a clash of ignorances - on all sides - and ignorance is a condition that we can do much to remedy.

Similarly, I believe that we can work together to encourage the development of sustainable democracies in parts of the world where democracy has not flourished - reflecting even more rigorously on the conditions which make democracy possible, and helping democratic institutions adapt more effectively to local conditions.

Thirdly, I believe we can partner effectively in applying the world's most advanced expertise to the challenges of development in parts of the world which are less advanced.

The United States' position as a world leader, in my view grows directly out of its accomplishments as a Knowledge Society - and this Knowledge - rightly applied - can continue to be a resource of enormous global value.

I thought it might be appropriate for me to say a few words at this point about the Ismaili community and my role as Imam. The Ismailis are a diverse community within the Shia branch of Islam, living in many parts of the world, and encompassing numerous ethnic and linguistic traditions. Their diversity reflects the profound pluralism of the Muslim world. The diverse Ismaili community has been united over many centuries by an allegiance to the living hereditary Imam of the time.

Let me also emphasize the inseparable nature, within Islam, of faith and world: the intertwining of spiritual responsibility with the conduct of daily life. My responsibilities as Imam for interpreting the faith are thus accompanied by a strong engagement with issues relating to the quality of life, affirming the dignity of all peoples.

As many of you know, Ismaili institutions everywhere are anchored in the community's Jamatkhanas, our places of congregation. Governor Perry has honored us by being present at the ceremonies in years past when we have laid the foundations and opened our Jamatkhanas in Texas, both in Sugarland and Plano. Most recently, the Governor's encouragement has been instrumental in our decision to build the Community's first high-profile Ismaili Center in the United States - and to situate it in Houston. For this support, Governor, we are profoundly grateful.

This new edifice will take its place along with six other Ismaili Centers - now located or soon to be located - in London, Vancouver, Lisbon, Dubai, Dushanbe and Toronto. You have mentioned, Governor, your own visit to the Dubai Center, which I had the honor of opening officially last month. We are confident that the new Ismaili Center in Houston, like the Center in Dubai, will not only enhance the physical fabric of the city, but will also serve as a tangible symbol of the values we share with our good neighbors here in Texas.

Shared values are what underly successful partnerships. We look forward to continuing and expanding our partnerships with the people of Texas as we work to extend the blessings of opportunity throughout our communities - and throughout the world.

My thanks to all of you for sharing in this memorable evening.

**Speech by Mawlana Hazar Imam  
At the Inauguration of The Ismaili Centre Dubai  
Wednesday, 26 March 2008**

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum  
Your Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan  
Honourable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

*As-Salaam-o-Alaikum*

I am deeply pleased that all of you have been able to join us for the inauguration of this elegant new Ismaili Centre. Your presence is itself a symbol of the wonderful diversity that characterizes Dubai. Your interest and support gives added meaning to our celebration — as we honour today a great architectural accomplishment, the exciting institutional activities for which it will provide a home, and the remarkable people who have made all of this possible.

Those extraordinary people include, of course, His Highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who has so generously given the land for this Centre. Let me express once again, on behalf of the Ismaili community, our profound appreciation to His Highness and his family.

I am particularly pleased that you, Your Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum have again honoured us with your presence today. You were so gracious as to witness the ceremony at which the foundation stone of this Centre was laid a little over four years ago.

And let me also acknowledge, with deepest gratitude, the many other donors to this project, in Dubai and in so many other places, as well as those who designed and constructed and decorated this building and its adjacent park. Your dedication and generosity have been at the very heart of the long planning and building process which culminates so happily at this moment.

We gather today at a special place — and at a special time.

We welcome our new Ismaili Centre in a setting which has itself become a great centre — a hub of cosmopolitan activity, a truly global crossroads. We hear a great deal these days about the words “convergence” and “connectivity.” In my judgment, Dubai is a place where those words truly come to life. Dubai has become the very embodiment of the global village, placing itself at the forefront of an enormous surge toward global convergence.

The Dubai ethic is one that honours a generous exchange of knowledge and ideas, that welcomes the opportunity to learn from others, that celebrates not only our historic identities but also our open horizons.

This ethic of exploration and interconnectedness is one that is deeply shared by the Ismaili community. It is an ethic, in fact, that is firmly rooted in our faith — a value system which grows from deeply spiritual roots.

It understands that human diversity is itself a gift of Allah — that pluralism is not a threat but a blessing. It sees the desire to explore and connect as a way to learn and grow — not to dilute our identities but to enrich our self-knowledge. This ethic emanates ultimately from a relationship to the Divine which inspires a deep sense of personal humility — and a relationship to humankind which is infused with a spirit of generous service and mutual respect.

This new Centre is itself a profoundly spiritual place. Its defining symbolism is inspired by the Fatimid tradition — stretching back over 1000 years and widely shared with sister traditions throughout the Islamic world — from Baghdad to Bokhara. As its architects have so effectively

realized, this building exists fundamentally as a place for peaceful contemplation, but one that is set in a social context. It is not a place to hide from the world, but rather a place which inspires us to engage our worldly work as a direct extension of our faith.

Sheikh Mohammad has provided a powerful example of how the ethics of our Islamic faith can be taken into the world, through his affirmation of a pillar of Islamic values, the spirit of generosity toward others. As he wrote recently, and I quote him, “I always ask: How can I help? What can I do for people? How can I improve people’s lives? That’s part of my value system. The Dubai narrative is all about changing people’s lives for the better...”

In that spirit, His Highness, in describing Dubai has replaced the word “Capitalist” with the word “Catalyst” — in that it inspires those who live and work here to greater levels of personal accomplishment. His philosophy, to paraphrase John Kennedy, calls us to ask “not what one can achieve for oneself, but what one can help others achieve.” And this, too, is an expression which grows out of deeply rooted Islamic principles.

In our Development Network we have used a slightly different vocabulary to describe a very similar commitment. We like to talk about building what we call an “enabling environment,” one that can provide what we have called “the spark” which can “ignite” a spirit of individual determination.

Our Development Network pursues that objective in many places in many ways — one apt example is the early childhood education programme here at the Ismaili Centre — a long-term investment in moulding human character at the most formative time of its life.

Of course, we must be realistic about the challenges we face. This is a region, after all, which Sheikh Mohammad has described as a “tough neighbourhood” — the locus in recent years of tragic clashes and cleavages, including many divisions within Islam itself. And yet at the same time, this is a region of powerful potential and promise. That promise will be increasingly fulfilled as the Islamic world learns to embrace ever more effectively the spirit of fundamental cohesion expressed so well in the Amman Declaration of 2005, along with its affirmation that the variety of expressions within Islam is not a curse but “a mercy.” That spirit of comity, in turn, can become a great Islamic contribution to the future of this region — and to the future of our world.

Just as Dubai is indeed a very special place, this is also a very special time. For me this is particularly true because this new beginning coincides with my 50th year as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims — a Golden Jubilee moment which connects the past to the future for me and in a special way.

And that is what this celebration today is all about — at a time of demanding challenge, we look for strength and inspiration from our spiritual and cultural roots.

My thanks again to all of you for sharing in this special moment.

Thank You.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the State Banquet in Madagascar  
27 November 2007**

Prime Minister,  
Mr President of the National Assembly,  
Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I must thank you for the invitation you have extended to me in the name of the President of the Republic and the Government of Madagascar, and for your warm welcome and hospitality that is so typical of the Madagascan people. I am touched to the heart. I should also like to say how flattered and honoured I am by your words, which are at the same time a tribute to my community.

It was in 1956, fifty years ago, that I first set foot on Madagascan soil. Of all my subsequent visits, this one is especially symbolic for me and my community. I am celebrating my Golden Jubilee and I thank you for your good wishes on this occasion as I visit all the countries which are close to my heart and which have a special significance for me and for the Ismailis.

The Ismaili community settled in Madagascar around one hundred years ago and is deeply involved in the country's economic and social life. It has become interwoven in the national fabric and has come to be one of the many cultures and traditions that enrich the nation. The Ismailis are present in nearly thirty-five countries across the world and represent a significant pluralism, both cultural and linguistic.

Islam's ethics establish an inextricable link between spiritual and material life, Din and Dunya. Consequently, my responsibilities as spiritual leader and interpreter of the faith are coupled with a deep commitment to improving the quality of life. These activities are not limited to the Ismaili community but extend to those who share their lives, whether on a local, national or international scale.

Our duty is to try to free people from poverty. And to me, poverty means being without shelter, without protection, without access to healthcare, education, or credit, and without hope of ever controlling one's own destiny. This means condemning one's children and grandchildren to unacceptable living conditions.

A voluntarist and innovative strategy is needed in order to break this chain of despair and total imprisonment.

That is why I, as Imam of the Ismailis, considered it my duty to meet the challenges now facing these communities. I chose to involve myself in development projects in every field by means of a group of private agencies known as the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a multi-sector network whose purpose is to fight poverty and work for the benefit of all, irrespective of faith or origin.

In May 2005, with the support of the government of Madagascar and the ministers present here today, we identified the Sofia region and set up a rural development programme which you, Prime Minister, were kind enough to mention. As a result of this programme and its innovative methods, in particular the training provided for farmers, the production of rice per hectare has doubled and has already benefited the 10,000 growers taking part.

Building on expertise acquired in more than twelve countries in Africa and Asia, in 2006 we also established the microfinance agency, the P.A.M.F., which so far, has seven branches in rural and urban areas and nearly 3,000 customers.

Among other initiatives, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) encourages economic progress in developing countries and those undergoing post-conflict reconstruction. AKFED intervenes in areas where returns on investment are drawn-out and uncertain and

which many private investors consider too risky. Profits generated by AKFED are reinvested in countries where there is insufficient foreign investment, in order to shore up their national economies. For example, we have recently launched the various energy projects to which you have referred, with the inauguration a few months ago of a new hydroelectric scheme (at Bujagali in Uganda), and also in telecommunications (in Afghanistan) and tourism (particularly in East Africa), where private initiative is ready to act in accordance with the domestic priorities of the countries concerned.

We were particularly impressed by the supreme importance that the “Madagascar Action Plan” (MAP) attaches to education, since it coincides with the Network’s own ethos.

The objective is to halt the brain drain, a veritable scourge in developing countries, by providing universities which maintain international standards with regional campuses, such as the one I have just announced in Arusha, which could eventually serve all the nations of East Africa and the Indian Ocean. Institutions such as this will, I hope, break the dependency of the South on the North and mould the leaders of the future. The improvement of centres of excellence in primary and secondary education with an international, multilingual curriculum, will enable pupils to enter these universities as well as the finest institutions worldwide. Furthermore, a Professional Development Centre will help improve teacher competence and introduce innovative teaching methods.

Madagascar has identified the challenges facing its people and drawn up a clear road map. And as the country appropriately shares this vision of the future with the Aga Khan Development Network, we can now move forward hand-in-hand for the good of generations to come.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the State Banquet Mozambique - 20 November 2007**

Your Excellency President Guebuza  
Your Excellency Madam First Lady  
Your Excellency the Prime Minister  
Honourable Mayor of Maputo  
Honourable Governor of Maputo  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to express, Mr. President, to you and your guests, and to the people of this country, my profound gratitude for the extraordinary warmth of your welcome.

The Mozambican people have a great gift for making visitors feel at home. As a previous visitor, I know well the special quality of a Mozambican welcome - and I deeply appreciate the kindnesses you have shared with me.

An anniversary is always an occasion for reflection - for looking back and for looking ahead. As we reflect tonight, we can do so with a special sense of hope and promise- in the future of Mozambique and in the future of Africa.

As you know, the future of Africa has been one of my central preoccupations over the past five decades. My interest grew partly out of the history of the Ismaili people in Africa - stretching back over a century and a half. And I was also fascinated by the great drama of national independence in those early years of my Imamate, as proud, ancient cultures - after so many years of colonial rule - began the journey toward stability and progress as self-governing countries.

That journey has often been a difficult one, especially in Mozambique. But that past, sometimes deeply painful, is gone - and Mozambicans now look to a new era of progress and of promise. Over the past fourteen years of post-conflict history - you have gone from negative growth rates in the range of eight percent a year, to positive growth rates in the same range! That is a remarkable accomplishment.

Great challenges remain, of course. The problems of poverty, disease, and illiteracy here are still enormous. But your recent progress has been built on sound principles - and, for that reason, Mozambique has become a valuable model for the whole of the developing world.

Your growth record is one of the best in Africa - built neither on diamonds nor on oil, as Prime Minister Diogo has put it - but on the development of human potential and the consolidation of the democratic processes.

Mozambique has learned to set careful priorities - to establish clear markers for progress, and then, carefully, to measure its progress against those indicators.

One of the prime qualities which recommends Mozambique as a model is your reliance on professional expertise rather than ideological caveats. In that spirit, you have built a broad consensus among many stakeholders - public and private, from civil society, and from the international community. In pursuing your great goals, you have been inclusive, rather than exclusive. In an era when frustration often breeds cynicism concerning the possibility of progress, Mozambique can provide inspiration and encouragement to other post conflict societies.

And there is more. Even as Mozambique points a path to progress in the economic and social realm, it also plays a leadership role in regional diplomacy. The contributions of former President Chissano in sensitive regions have been particularly appreciated, of course. Mozambique's standing as a highly regarded member of the community of nations will enable it to play an increasingly important, strategic role in relations between its neighbors to the



south and its neighbors to the north - between the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community.

The key ingredient in all of these efforts - within Mozambique and in its regional neighborhood, is a spirit of genuine partnership - an understanding that we can do things together that we can never do separately. The institutions of our Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) have experienced that spirit of partnership here in many ways, over many years - including our Agreement of Cooperation, signed nearly ten years ago.

Much of our work, as you know, has involved the northern areas, and especially the Mtwara Development Corridor. One project I would highlight is the Unity Bridge, linking northern Mozambique with southern Tanzania. Here we literally reach across national frontiers in a way that will stimulate progress on both sides of the border. Because of the Unity Bridge –and related projects - our investments in the leisure and tourism sector in southern Tanzania can have a multiplier effect within Mozambique. In a similar way, here and elsewhere, progress will accelerate and dreams will come true, whenever we are able to span borders with bridges.

We must also help young people build “Bridges to the Future” - that is the name, in fact, of one of our new scholarship programs. Our philosophy is to build leadership for tomorrow by educating the young on the basis of academic potential – not on social status or family income. That philosophy is at the core of our Aga Khan Academies program.

Many of you were present three years ago when we laid the foundation stone for a new Aga Khan Academy at Maputo. It will be part of an 18 school network - in 14 different countries - all teaching the international baccalaureate curriculum. This system of schools will have significant commonalities. Each one, for example, will be supported by a Professional Development Center - a place for teaching the teachers - using best practice techniques from around the world. These teachers will serve both the Academy and other schools in Mozambique.

In all of these Schools, moreover, our watchword will be “Pluralism” as we develop leaders who can deal effectively with diverse peoples in a globalizing world.

Some commonalities will be easier to develop than others. Here in Mozambique, for example, there is no tradition of residential primary and secondary schools, and there is not a great deal of experience in educating in English. Yet both concepts - residential education and educating in both the national language and English - are two common goals for our wider network of academies. These are questions which we must resolve with prudence - pursuing sound long-term goals, but understanding short-term realities.

On the economic development front, we are planning a new garment factory for export, employing some 700 women in the first phase. We expect the project to begin next June - but its success will depend again on partnership - through an enabling labour environment.

Power generation and rural electrification is another critical area. The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development recently played a central financing role for one the largest hydroelectric projects in African history, in Uganda - at Bujagali on the Upper Nile. We hope now to apply that experience to projects in Mozambique. Meanwhile, we have also invested in a new fibre optic cable linking Southern and Eastern Africa (including Mozambique ) with Mumbai in India and Marseille in France. This link will enable low cost broadband access to rural communities within Mozambique, and will require additional investment in the existing backbone structure.

While these major infra-structure projects move ahead on one hand, we also work at the micro level - in some 146 villages, including 21,000 households, in Cabo Delgado, for example. There the selling of cash crops, the storage of food, the development of diverse income sources and the creation of Village Development Organizations, have all become commonplace in a very short time. New rural development programs are helping to increase

crop yields, to circulate health and nutrition information, and to expand inoculations and sanitation programs.

A recent World Bank report strongly recommends that the countries of Africa should improve agricultural productivity - as the government of Mozambique is working to do. Yet - our experience, particularly in Asia, teaches us that a time will surely come when agricultural productivity can simply go no further - the growth potential will simply run out. And, when that occurs, agricultural economies must seek new activities to sustain their populations.

This scenario may be many years ahead in the case of Mozambique, but diversifying the economy deserves immediate thought. One area where that can start happening now, in my belief, is the leisure and travel sector. AKDN has devoted considerable resources to expanding this sector. We are about to launch, for example, a major renovation project at the Polana Serena Hotel in Maputo, and we see enormous potential for extending into Mozambique our East African safari circuit of travel facilities.

At the same time, in and around Pemba, micro credit projects are creating new economic opportunities - we anticipate a tripling of these programs to the 3 million dollar level over three years. We have also noted the President's concern about the lack of financial services in rural areas and are ready to address this concern by establishing a rural micro finance bank in northern Mozambique.

In all of these ways, then, our commitment is to add to the foundations you have already laid for future progress. As we do, we realize more and more, with each passing day, the importance of effective partnerships.

It is in that spirit of partnership, then, that I come to Mozambique, grateful for what we have done together in the past, and inspired by the things we will be attempting together in the future. We are proud that we can join you in the great, continuing story of Mozambican progress.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the Conference on Central Asia and Europe :  
A New Economic Partnership for the 21st Century  
Berlin - November 13, 2007**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Your Excellencies Foreign Minister Steinmeier, Dr. Belka  
and Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner,  
State Secretary Erler,  
Your Excellencies Ministers from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan,  
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and  
Uzbekistan,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me, first, acknowledge and thank for their kind words those who have spoken before me this morning -- the Foreign Minister, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Dr. Marek Belka -- as well as Benita Ferrero Waldner, the EC Commissioner for External Relations.

It has always been special pleasure to return to Berlin -- a city that continues to be synonymous with the word "cosmopolitan". Berlin is truly a global connecting point -- a fact which has been instrumental in our decision to open an office of the Aga Khan Development Network here.

How appropriate that we should be discussing, in this historic crossroads city, one of the great, inter-cultural projects of our time -- the effort to build a partnership between Central Asia and Europe. I commend the German Government for its leading role in this effort, and the European Union for carrying it forward -- with its endorsement of a "Regional Strategy" for Central Asia a few months ago. Others have also played welcome contributing roles, including The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

As I offer my own comments today, I will draw on the experience of our Aga Khan Development Network in Central Asia. We have come to know much of this region well, particularly Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; not only has it long been home to significant numbers of Ismaili Muslims, but we have also developed a widening range of programs across the region over the past fifteen years.

It is appropriate that the word "Regional" is at the center of our deliberations on Central Asia. The countries are diverse in many ways -- and the development approaches there must be sensitive to divergent requirements. But these countries also have a common historical experience, including several centuries of shared Islamic heritage. Each of them has faced the need to build new political and economic institutions following the breakup of the Soviet Union. And, as the EU Strategy document emphasizes, each of them can only optimise their development through a regional approach.

In this respect, the Central Asian experience parallels the European experience. In Europe, too, the end of the Cold War demanded new political and economic structures and it is striking how quickly Europe is now reaching out to Central Asia -- offering, among other things, the great gift of a powerful regional example.

Among other things, the European example demonstrates that a healthy sense of national identity need not be a barrier to constructive regional engagement. So my first objective today is to tell you how warmly I endorse regional diagnosis for Central Asia. And because that diagnosis begins in the right place, it also extends into a series of wise prescriptions for the future. These prescriptions are validated in large measure by the experiences of the Aga Khan Development Network institutions in Central Asia. We have learned a great deal from those experiences -- both successes and setbacks, but we can learn a great deal more by sharing our lessons.

The problems of Central Asia are remarkably complex -- their causes are multiple and defiantly inter-tangled. Progress requires a multi-faceted and multi-input approach -- a proper "policy mix"-- to cite the language of the EU Report. The learning curve is steep and there should be a sense of urgency -- for all of us -- and all the more so, because solutions can be elusive.

In many ways, the greatest obstacle in the struggle for progress in Central Asia is simple human frustration. In this region the sense is that its development partners talk about progress, and then act, and then talk some more -- but too often, for the people of the region, progress is just "not happening". When it does happen, it too often is incomplete, or exceptional, or fleeting. This situation is of course by far the most acute in Afghanistan.

What we face in Central Asia is a race against frustration -- which means a race against time and mediocrity. Alternative scenarios, often utopian and extremist, beckon on every hand -- and people will not be patient with pragmatic scenarios unless the work in practice is effective. The EU rightly emphasizes the need for greater "continuity" in these efforts -- so that each experience, successful or unsuccessful, becomes a building block for the future.

It is a daunting challenge indeed to move in a coordinated way on multiple fronts. But as we do, success can become self-generating. Progress on one, or two, or three fronts can often make progress easier on other fronts -- a sense of possibility can also be contagious. I acknowledge the considerable advances that each of the Central Asian countries is making, including recognising the needs of their rural populations.

In a spirit of shared learning and with diffidence -- let me highlight a few of our own experiences.

I would begin with the University of Central Asia, founded in the year 2000 by the Ismaili Iamat -- and the governments of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

I remember the signing ceremonies well. They were the culmination of six years of planning -- an experience which itself illustrated the importance not only of regional cooperation, but also of cooperation among disciplines and among social sectors. Our goal was to address a massive regional problem: how to improve the quality of life of nearly 25 million people who live in the high mountain areas of the region and beyond?

We often talk about Public Private Partnerships -- as the EU Strategy does. But such relationships need not be limited to cooperation between governments and the private business sector. There is also enormous potential for active partnering between governments and the not-for-profit institutions of Civil Society. The University of Central Asia is an example of that potential -- and one worth usefully being replicated. The University has recently graduated its first students from the School of Professional and Continuing Education in three mountain communities: Khorog, Tajikistan ; Naryn, Kyrgyzstan ; and Tekeli, Kazakhstan. We have prepared our graduates for active roles in the world of modern business and finance through programmes benchmarked against international standards. The story of these students illustrates another central precept -- the importance of educating people to meet carefully prioritised needs and specific employment opportunities. In the same way, plans for our forthcoming undergraduate and post-graduate programs will emphasize governance skills -- appropriate for future leaders in the public sector, as well as for Civil Society. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government of Germany and a number of German institutions for their support.

Closely paralleling these efforts is our engagement with systems of schools for pre-university education in cities ranging from Bishkek and Dushanbe, to Osh and Khorog -- again reflecting our shared confidence that the development of human capital is the foundation stone for effective development. It is also almost impossible to develop quality tertiary university education if its supply system, secondary education, is sub-standard.

Another set of our experiences which illustrate the potential for partnerships between the public sector and Civil Society involve our health institutions' alliances with local hospitals,

including nursing training in Khorog, and other regional referral hospitals in Tajikistan, and the six Institutes of Nursing in Afghanistan, and even a new venture in the use of telecommunications advances to link hospitals in distant cities: Today the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi is connected to the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul.

Among the most difficult of challenges, of course, is connecting any progress we may achieve at a national level with more remote, rural areas -- where poverty often seems most intractable. Mountain peoples, in particular, have endured economic hardship, civil strife, arms and narcotics trafficking, an insecure food supply, earthquakes, water shortages -- the list could go on. But overcoming these problems will require a searching re-examination of what poverty really means. I am increasingly inclined to define poverty not only as a matter of income, but rather as a state of marginalisation in all of those conditions which contribute to the quality of human life. A state of poverty is a state of deprivation with respect to health and nutrition, education and security, housing and credit, and all the other conditions which are essential to human well-being.

Here too we are learning as we go. In this spirit, and with the active support of KfW, we are experimenting with innovative microcredit programs -- especially for the rural poor -- as well as with local efforts to increase agricultural output. Only as legitimate economic activity becomes a viable source of sustenance, and all the manifestations of poverty recede for the peoples of these regions, will the blight of crime, and drugs, and terrorism, be diminished.

The EU report also emphasized the need to expand energy production and to distribute energy more equitably. We are responding to these needs through projects in eastern Tajikistan, to cite one example, where restored Soviet era power plants will provide near 24-hour coverage for Eastern Tajikistan, as well as to people on the other side of the Pyanj River -- in Afghanistan.

Expanding trade and international investment, creating new sources of economic growth, -- and doing so on an urgent basis, and with a long-term perspective, -- are essential priorities for Central Asia. To this end, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development is increasingly investing in the leisure sector in the region -- building new hotels in Dushanbe, Khorog, and in Kabul -- and working on a major tourism planning project for the Issyk-kul area in Kyrgyzstan.

The recent opening of a new hotel in Kabul has been a particularly visible example of our Central Asian investments. Our hope, of course, is that a tangible example of confidence in the future can help trigger an upward spiral of hope and renewal. In this regard, the challenges of Afghanistan become particularly important. For without a viable and progressive Afghanistan, any progress which might be made elsewhere in the region will at best be very fragile.

One of the approaches I have used in thinking about development is the concept of "The Enabling Environment". It has grown out of my impatience with overly simple myths about how development really works.

The term "Enabling Environment" reminds us that the full context of interacting forces must be brought together if sustainable development is to be achieved. The term also recognizes that even the right environment is still only an enabling condition -- not a sufficient one. In the end, human progress must grow out of human inspiration and endeavour. I have come to know the Central Asian peoples and their dreams and aspirations. I know of their proud entrepreneurial spirit -- often manifested at the village and household level. It is critical -- even as we plan for development at the "macro" level -- that we also build at the "micro" level. Too often, we forget that a large number of people in Central Asia live in the countryside.

A sound enabling environment must create a favourable framework in which people's energy and creativity can be motivated, mobilized and rewarded.

This framework should embrace such conditions as political stability, safety and security, citizen rights and predictable democratic practices. A supportive environment should include

transport systems which make cooperation possible, incentives which encourage broader trade, and a legal and administrative framework which is impartial, predictable, and efficient. These concerns are largely the responsibilities of government, but effective governmental efforts can take us only so far. And that is why I so often talk about the role of "Civil Society"; the capacities of the private sector, and the value of partnerships among these various institutions.

The key to building partnerships -- whether they are among social sectors, or among countries -- is a profound spirit of reciprocal obligation -- a readiness to share the work, to share the costs, to share the risks, and to share the credit. In the end, what it will require most -- in Central Asia -- as it has in Europe -- is a spirit of mutual trust.

Let me mention in conclusion, one other set of relationships which will be central to the concerns we have been discussing. I refer to the relationship of both Europe and Central Asia to the world of Islam.

During the Soviet period, the populations of Central Asia were dissuaded from learning or practising the Islamic faith of their ancestors. The result, over time, has been a theological vacuum.

Now the five newly independent countries of Central Asia are re-establishing their relations with the Ummah, that is, with Muslim peoples all around the world. They are doing so quickly, and at a time when relations between the Ummah and the West are particularly strained -- more so than at any other time I can remember.

Some may suggest that these matters of faith should not be a part of the development dialogue between Europe and Central Asia. But allow me to ask the reverse question. Can we really ignore this matter without consequence? I think not.

Two aspects of this question deserve our attention:

The first concerns the relationship between the countries of Europe and their growing Muslim minorities. As is the case all around the world, the effort to accommodate a variety of faiths within any population is often problematic. But a successful effort to establish respectful, pluralistic attitudes and behaviour, based on a deep respect for religious and cultural diversity, will surely help to shape emerging inter-regional relationships. Is it too much to hope that one day, young Muslims, from all backgrounds, all educated in Europe will serve wisely and competently in their countries of origin?

Noticeably today, the peoples of Central Asia are developing religious and civic practices, reflecting the views of their own diverse peoples, but also with Muslim views from outside the region. There is no doubt questions will arise, such as how matters of faith should affect political governance or civil jurisprudence. Responding to such issues could be divisive, and will need to be approached with sensitivity, patience and humility.

My second question concerns the role that Islamic countries could play in partnership with Europe in Central Asian development. I believe that Europe's commendable efforts to address the challenges of Central Asia can be even more effective if they see the Muslim world as a relevant resource.

Fortunately there are today a number of Muslim countries which can serve as helpful models and available partners for a progressive and welcoming Central Asia. These are Islamic countries which have kept their own peace, and have progressed thanks to the application of best practice to their development. Many are Islamic countries with strongly pluralist societies -- and whose learning curves for development to levels of global performance are relevant to Central Asia

Much more needs to be done in Central Asia, for many more institutions, and many more people, in many more places, covering many more types of support, within frontiers and across frontiers, if there can be any hope that the pace of progress will become a self-

sustaining momentum. The central issue is not, understanding what needs to be done -- for all of us share the same analysis and common goals. The issue is essentially one of scale.

Throughout Central Asia, with each passing day, we see new examples of what can be achieved when we learn to transcend old boundaries -- to replace the icy past of the Cold War by the warmth of new partnerships.

It is that spirit of partnership which brings us here today -- manifested within Europe and within Central Asia -- and now with growing success between Europe and Central Asia.

In that spirit of partnership, then, let us continue, wherever we encounter the boundaries of the past -- to build bridges to the future. I am proud and grateful for the opportunity to join you in that endeavour.

Thank you.

## **Speech at the Inauguration of the Restored Monuments in Darb al-Ahmar, Cairo, 26 October 2007**

Bismillahir-Rahamir-Rahim  
Your Excellencies  
The Minister of Culture  
The Governor of Cairo  
Ambassadors  
Distinguished Guests

It is a very particular pleasure for me to welcome you tonight, as we share in a special moment - and the first and most important thing that I want to do is to thank you for what you have done to make this moment possible.

The buildings we inaugurate are central elements in an effort which has given me profound personal satisfaction for nearly a quarter of a century – the revitalisation of Islamic Cairo.

The joy I received from this project stems from at least three of its extraordinary dimensions.

First, I have found that this endeavour has provided for me, personally, a profound sense of connection with my own ancestors, the Fatimid Caliphs, who founded Cairo and who laid its physical and cultural foundations 1000 years ago. To reach back across 35 generations and to be able to engage in the restoration and renewal of their legacy is a rare and stirring privilege. How could I not be affected seeing the remains of the original Fatimid walls and towers that protected this city when they founded it? And this experience has special meaning for me as I mark my own 50th year as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

Secondly, this entire project, from the time we began, with so many of you, to dream about it, 23 years ago, has provided an inspiring example of broadly based cooperation – among diverse people and institutions, working across cultural, religious and national lines, including participants from government, the private sector, and the non-profit institutions of civil society. It has involved people whose homes are thousands of miles away from Cairo – and it has also involved, most profoundly, the people of this neighbourhood, those who live and work only minutes away, in the very shadows of these buildings.

Among the partnerships I would note today are the ones we have enjoyed with the Egyptian Government, the Ministry of Culture, the Governorate of Cairo, the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the Social Fund for Development, the World Monuments Fund, the Swiss Egyptian Development Fund, the Ford Foundation, the French Institute of Archaeology, the American Research Centre and the United States Embassy in Cairo, as well as the city of Stuttgart. And I would also note with gratitude the signing, this past July, by the Governorate and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, of a formal Public-Private Partnership (PPP) linking Al-Azhar Park with the ongoing projects in Darb al-Ahmar and adjacent areas. Whatever barriers history might possibly have put in our way have been removed by our common will to achieve a remarkable goal.

These diverse interactions are particularly fitting, of course, as we remember the origins of this city. The Fatimids, after all, prided themselves on a broadly inclusive approach to knowledge. What they founded here would become a truly global city – to use contemporary parlance. Pluralism was indeed the hallmark of a Golden Age of the City Victorious 1000 years ago. I am happy that I can feel in this time also, like during the time of my predecessors, that there is true pluralist consensus surrounding our endeavours – all of us working together - to revive the Islamic city.

The first two reasons, then, for my special identification with this undertaking are its historical connections to the past, and the diverse and plural dimensions of its present. The third element, however, has to do with its sustainability in the future - and in discussing that future, two important questions come to mind.



They are: first, at what point of physical improvement can we consider that the areas of the Islamic city most at risk have been restored, rehabilitated and returned to their residents in a secured manner? And secondly, what can and should we do to ensure that the more than one million visitors per year who are likely to visit the Azhar Park in the future become an economic benefit rather than a potential economic burden for the residents of Darb al-Ahmar?

If we are able to develop and implement strong and fulfilling answers to these questions, then my third reason to view this as a thrilling project will be fulfilled: It will constitute an extraordinary gift to the future. Even as we look back over many centuries today – even as we have reopened and literally “uncovered” gifts from the past as this project has developed – so we can also look far ahead in time. We are aware today of the connections we are establishing to generations yet unborn, those who will live here and those who visit from afar, and who will treasure these sites as precious gateways to their history.

Let me attempt briefly to suggest some responses to the two questions I have asked earlier, the first being to define when sufficient physical work will have been completed for us to consider the core of the Islamic city restored. Logically, we must complete the work which is already underway, and which has produced such magnificent achievements as the restoration of the Kheyrebek Complex, where we are gathered today, and the Umm al Sultan Shabaan Mosque through the close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and its Supreme Council of Antiquities. The ambitious conservation programme that lies ahead contemplates interventions in the Alin Aq Palace, the Tarabay Mausoleum, the Aslam Mosque, and in due course in the Blue Mosque. We must finish the restoration of the Ayyubid wall, and the most important open spaces along it. And we must complete the archaeological site at the North-west edge of the Park with its Fatimid and Mamluk excavations. This site, in turn, will be tied into the new museum of historic Cairo being created in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities, as well as the new Urban Plaza and the significant underground parking which are both part of the programme agreed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture with the Governorate of Cairo.

To complete this list of future tasks, I should add that along the historic wall there are several hundred houses that remain to be restored, just as the Early Childhood Centre and the Vocational Training Centre remain to be completed. Finally, I cannot see how this enormous endeavour, which still lies ahead, could be considered complete without serious attention being given to the area's ongoing infrastructure, such as the road surfaces, the sewage disposal system, the distribution of water and electricity, and signage and public lighting.

The second question I have raised was how we increase the impact of the new economic life generated by the Azhar Park to the benefit of the people of Darb al-Ahmar.

In responding to this question, I would note that special emphasis has been placed by our planners on sustainability. It has always been clear that a strong financial base must be created just for maintaining the accomplishments we note today. The project must be compatible with the long term health of this neighbourhood and its community. For any important work of restoration to survive and to thrive into the longer-range future, it must contribute to the well-being of those who live in its presence – so that they in turn will have reason to safeguard its enduring viability.

We have two opportunities to strengthen the economic life of this part of Islamic Cairo which I want to highlight today: The first is to encourage a higher number of the visitors to the Park to come to Darb al-Ahmar to see its historic buildings and to acquire goods and services. It is therefore essential that the North-west and South gates of the Park should be completed and opened as soon as possible, and that the visitors should be encouraged to walk to the restored wall, and then through it, into this unique historic area of Cairo, Darb al-Ahmar with its remarkable concentration of monuments and open spaces.

There is another way, a second way, to support the economic enhancement of the population of Darb al-Ahmar. I believe much more can and should be done with our micro-credit programme, by developing new products, better adapted to local needs, and making them more easily accessible. This work is ongoing, but it must be completed and put in place early

enough so that the service providers and traders of Darb al-Ahmar can prepare themselves in good time for the increased number of visitors that will come from the Park.

A long and strenuous journey began when we gathered here back in 1984 to hold a seminar on the growth of Cairo. What we mark today is another milestone along that path – not the first nor the last, but an important reminder of how far we have come – and an added moment of encouragement – as we continue the demanding journey which lies ahead of us.

I know you join me in feeling that we have been extraordinarily blessed in the heritage that has been given to us – as well as in the friends and collaborators who now share our life and work – all of us striving together to be good stewards of our inheritance as we pass it on to the future.

Thank You.

**Closing Address by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the "Musée-Musées" Round Table  
Louvre Museum - 17 October 2007**

Mr President  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Shortly after the announcement of our museum in Toronto, the aim of which is to present Islamic art in all its beauty and diversity, I had the immense pleasure of receiving Henri Loyrette's invitation to stage an exhibition here at the Louvre.

I thank Mr Loyrette and the management of the Louvre most warmly for organising this round table and inviting me to speak this evening. This is a completely new situation for me, since I have never previously taken part in this kind of initiative in France, much less at the Louvre. You will not be surprised if I confess that I feel as though I am sitting an extremely important school examination for which I have done no preparation at all! So I approach the task with deep trepidation!

When I was invited to talk to you about the future of the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto and the objects that will be on show there, I was asked to explain the significance of our exhibition and the role museums might play in improving understanding between East and West.

The meaning of our exhibition was certainly better illustrated by my brother Prince Ayn, and the director of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Luis Monreal. I myself could not have explained the technicalities, but I think it is interesting to know about the framework within which our initiative is taking place, and it is to this issue that I shall turn now. It is, of course, risky to generalise about a world as diversified, complex and pluralistic as the Islamic world in this day and age. I shall allow myself to take that risk and attempt to explain to you some of the strategic aims we considered in relation to putting our collection on exhibition.

I believe that today the Islamic world's view of its own future is seriously affected by a divergent squint. It is a world split into two tendencies: on the one hand, modernisers and believers in progressive change, on the other, traditionalists who might even be described as hidebound. Both seek to determine future directions to be taken by the Ummah which will reinforce its identity, or rather its identities, while remaining rooted in a truth which is firmly Muslim. In practice, these two tendencies can be seen in the political domain in the differences between theocratic governance and the secular state; between the application of Sharia in all legal fields and the complete absence of Sharia or its application only in the domain of civil law; between economic and financial systems based on Sharia and systems that are essentially liberal and westernised; between religious education at every level and a national system with no reference at all to religion throughout the whole educational process, apart from the madrasa option for very young children.

In this context, we thought it essential, whichever choice Muslim populations may indicate to their governments, to clarify certain aspects of the history of Muslim civilisations in order that today's two main tendencies, modern and traditional, can base their ideas on historical realities and not on history that has been misunderstood or even manipulated.

Firstly, the 1,428 years of the Ummah embrace many civilisations and are therefore characterised by an astonishing pluralism. In particular, this geographic, ethnic, linguistic and religious pluralism has manifested itself at the most defining moments in the history of the Ummah, hence the objective of the Aga Khan collection, which is to highlight objects drawn from every region and every period, and created from every kind of material in the Muslim world.

The second great historical lesson to be learnt is that the Muslim world has always been wide open to every aspect of human existence. The sciences, society, art, the oceans, the environment and the cosmos have all contributed to the great moments in the history of Muslim civilisations. The Qur'an itself repeatedly recommends Muslims to become better educated in order better to understand God's creation. Our collection seeks to demonstrate

the openness of Muslim civilisations to every aspect of human life, even going so far as to work in partnership with intellectual and artistic sources originating in other religions.

The third important observation we can make about the Ummah today is that the two main tendencies, traditional and modern, are trying to maintain, indeed to develop, their Islamic legitimacy. Loss of identity, anxiety about the risk of being caught up in a process of westernisation that is essentially Christian and is perceived as becoming less and less religious, are deep and very real concerns. Where the two tendencies diverge is on the question of how to maintain and strengthen this identity in the future.

Here, I would like to digress in order to illustrate how deep this loss of identity can be, even though it passes unrecognised until it is too late. Thirty years ago, I and a number of Muslim intellectuals met to ask ourselves an apparently simple but in reality extremely complex question: "Has the Muslim world lost the ability to express itself in the field of architecture, a field admired and acknowledged as one of the most powerful manifestations of every great Muslim civilisation?" The response was a unanimous 'Yes'. Since then, many efforts have been made to reverse the situation, including the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, but one of the causes was that, throughout the Ummah, none of the teachers in any of the schools of architecture had studied in their home countries. Without exception, every teacher of architecture in every school and university in the Muslim world had been trained abroad, without any reference whatsoever to the Muslim world. This is, by the way, one of the reasons we are pleased to have been able to include in our collection some documents of unique architectural interest.

For the populations of the Ummah, loss of identity is an unquestionable reality, as it is for all societies. Perhaps one of the keys for the Muslim world will be to perpetuate their cultures in the modern world by means of rediscovered ancient and newly inspired sources. The Muslim world's two main tendencies, traditional and modern, will both have a role to play but if one attempts to achieve exclusivity at the expense of the other, the consequences will be predictable and highly damaging.

The second issue about which I have been asked to talk to you is what the role of museums might be in promoting understanding between East and West. It is a huge question to which I shall not try to give a comprehensive response but I should nevertheless point out that the Muslim world, with its history and cultures, and indeed its different interpretations of Islam, is still little known in the West. Even today in secondary and even university education in the West, the study of the Muslim world is still a specialist subject. One example is how little the Muslim world features in the study of humanities in the West, where courses are essentially centred around Judeo-Christian civilisations.

This lack of knowledge is a dramatic reality which manifests itself in a particularly serious way in western democracies, since public opinion has difficulties judging national and international policy vis-à-vis the Muslim world. There are an infinite number of historical reasons for this, but perhaps there is also a fear of proselytisation. Be that as it may, the two worlds, Muslim and non-Muslim, Eastern and Western, must, as a matter of urgency, make a real effort to get to know one another, for I fear that what we have is not a clash of civilisations, but a clash of ignorance on both sides. Insofar as civilisations manifest and express themselves through their art, museums have an essential role to play in teaching the two worlds to understand, respect and appreciate each other and ensuring that whole populations are given fresh opportunities to make contact with each other, using new, modern methods imaginatively and intelligently to bring about truly global communication.

Western museums, particularly those in Europe, have some extraordinary collections of Muslim art. Obviously, the Louvre and the Museum of Decorative Arts are the richest and I congratulate and thank them for the efforts they are making, with government backing, to fill the enormous void, a veritable black hole, which threatens us in this conflict of ignorance. Rest assured that you can fully count on us to play our part, however modest.

I shall finish by saying a few words specifically about our museum in Toronto. As you will have gathered, I am firmly convinced that better knowledge of the Muslim world can overcome distrust and therefore that city has been a strategic choice. While some North

American museums have significant collections of Muslim art, there is no institution devoted to Islamic art. In building the museum in Toronto, we intend to introduce a new actor to the North American art scene. Its fundamental aim will be an educational one, to actively promote knowledge of Islamic arts and culture. What happens on that continent, culturally, economically and politically, cannot fail to have worldwide repercussions – which is why we thought it important that an institution capable of promoting understanding and tolerance should exist there.

The museum will also belong to the large Muslim population living in Canada and the USA. It will be a source of pride and identity for all these people, showing the inherent pluralism of Islam, not only in terms of religious interpretations but also of cultural and ethnic variety. Furthermore, the museum will show, beyond the notoriously politicised form of Islam which now tends to make headlines, Islam is in reality an open-minded, tolerant faith capable of adopting other people's cultures and languages and making them its own. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Muslims of North America will play an important role in the development of states and populations within the Ummah.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2007 Award Presentation Ceremony  
Kuala Lumpur - 4 September 2007**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
Assalamu-Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi  
and Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

What a great pleasure it is for me to greet you today, as we present the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. This is an event we await with great anticipation as it comes around on the calendar every three years. It is the culmination of a wonderful process of discussion, research, exploration, and deliberation - one that has involved, through the years, nearly 8000 nominated projects and tens of thousands of participants, in some 88 countries. I think of the Award not as an event but as a process - and my thanks go out to all of you who have been a part of it.

This is a very good time and a very good place to hold this culminating ceremony. To begin with, we join our Malaysian friends in celebrating the 50 th anniversary just a few days ago of the Malaysian Merdeka. Anniversary occasions are valuable opportunities to reflect on the past and to plan for the future. The Malaysian people have had good reason this past week to look back with pride, and forward with hope. I am particularly pleased that we can welcome and congratulate the Prime Minister and his wife at this special moment in their nation's history.

I often reflect back on that period in the late 1950's, when so many developing countries were suddenly gaining their independence. Those were the very first years of my Imamate - which, as you may know, has also marked its 50 th anniversary this summer. I recall both how excited and how sobered we were as we thought about the enormous challenges which then faced these newly independent nations - including Malaysia - as they worked to develop effective new institutions which would give meaning to their freedom.

I also recall how our emotions since that time have oscillated between hope and frustration as the story of development has unfolded. But more and more, in many places, the story has become one of promise and progress. This is particularly true, of course, here in Malaysia. And it is most especially evident as we look out on the face of this city.

I doubt that even the most imaginative among us could have envisioned fifty years ago what Kuala Lumpur would look like today. Surely the transformation of the built environment in this city is among the distinctive and exciting urban transformations in our lifetimes. More than that, the dramatic remaking of this city, so powerfully evidenced in the architectural realm, is all the more compelling because it expresses a profound transformation in the social and economic realms as well.

So again I would say that this is a good and appropriate place to gather this week - and a very appropriate time to be meeting.

Our common purpose today is to honour excellence in the field of architecture, as we have defined it for the purpose of the Award - represented by the nine projects which the Master Jury has selected as the 2007 awardees. It is with deep sincerity and appreciation that I extend my warmest congratulations to all of you.

The imperative that we "honour excellence" could be misleading, however, if we define the architectural enterprise too narrowly. What we spotlight through this award is an all-encompassing sweep of human endeavour, shaping an infinite variety of human spaces

The spaces we had in mind in establishing this Award were broadly defined, encompassing places both public and private, enclosed and open, urban and rural, residential and commercial, cultural and industrial, intimate and grand, religious and secular.

And the categories of people we had in mind also were broadly inclusive. We recognize with enormous respect those who initially dream about inspiring combinations of shape and scale, pattern and colour, texture and volume, line and light. But we also honour those who express those dreams in tangible designs, or through inspired on-site articulations, as well as those who finance these projects, and those whose skills as managers and builders convert abstract ideas into physical realities.

In short, our definition of the words “Architects” and “Architecture” is very comprehensive.

As has been mentioned, this Award itself is marking one of those round-numbered anniversaries tonight - the 30 th year since it was created, the tenth completion of its triennial cycle.

A central concept when this all began 30 years ago was the power of Architecture to connect the past with the present and the future. It was my strong impression then that Architecture had largely abandoned the indigenous past - especially in Muslim societies and in the developing world.

Perhaps it was a natural tendency - the thought that if we wanted to speed up the modernization process, we should clear our minds, and even our landscapes, of what some saw as the dead hand of the past. But, in doing so, we often cut ourselves off from great well-springs of inspiration, power and moral authority.

This is one of the reasons our Award Ceremonies have normally been held in historically significant settings - reminders of just how rich our Islamic heritage has been.

Our venues were NOT meant to imply however that our goal was simply to reproduce the past. In fact, the projects we have honoured through the years - over one hundred of them - have invariably rejected simplistic, copy-machine approaches. The fact that we hold these current ceremonies in a contemporary setting - one which has itself been a recipient of our Award, symbolizes our faith that Architecture can not only link us to the past, but also propel us, creatively, into the future.

The past is not something to stand on, but rather to build on. If ignoring the past was a problem on one side, then the opposite danger was an exaggerated submission to the past, so that some creations and creators became prisoners of dogma or nostalgia.

There is a danger, in every area of life, everywhere in the world, that people will respond to the hastening pace of change with an irrational fear of modernism, and will want to embrace uncritically that which has gone before. The Islamic world has sometimes been vulnerable to this temptation - and the rich potential for a new “Islamic modernism” has sometimes been under-estimated.

The Aga Khan Award was designed, in part, to address this situation, encouraging those who saw the past as a necessary prelude to the future - and who saw the future as a fulfilling extension of the past. And, by and large through the years, this objective has been accomplished.

In my view, a healthy life, for an individual or a community, means finding a way to relate the values of the past, the realities of the present, and the opportunities of the future. The built environment can play a central role in helping us to achieve that balance.

One other area in which Architecture can play a connecting role is through the bridging of man and nature, between the natural and the built environments. For Islam particularly, this bridging objective is a religious imperative. The Quran commands us to be good stewards of Allah’s natural creation - even as we employ His gifts of time and talent to shape our

surroundings. Neither environmental protection nor economic development can be long sustained unless both objectives are prioritized. They are part of a Common Agenda.

Finally, I might observe what you also know very well: the fact that architecture also connects people. I think of people of different ethnic, religious and political backgrounds, with different skills and temperaments, from different classes and social sectors - all of whom can come to understand one another better by experiencing one another's architecture.

At its best, architecture is an inherently pluralistic enterprise - one that honours diversity - including diversity within and among Islamic communities. At its best, architecture will help people to come together across old divides rather than re-enforcing those divides and isolating one group from another.

Finally, as we present this Award for the tenth time, we must ask ourselves what we have learnt from the past three decades, and what should be our sights for the future.

While we cannot present an in-depth analysis right now, I think we can begin by acknowledging that, more or less everywhere in the Ummah, Muslims and others are asking themselves the right questions and are developing positive answers about their built environment: Are we building for the future in a culturally empathetic way? Do we now own and are we marshalling the necessary creative resources - ranging from new schools of architecture to new data bases, through which the architectural community can share its questions and answers, its problems and its successes? This in itself is a magnificent change from 1977, when such simple but essential questions were generally not being asked, or had only negative answers.

Looking to the future, we are faced with the challenge of change on a more massive scale than ever before in the history of Islam. As we look ahead, we can predict a continuing, relentless urbanisation in countries which are now largely rural. In some areas of the Ummah physical development is occurring at a near industrial scale. We can also see new international partnerships linking development institutions from the industrialised world with those of the Ummah. And, happily, we can now welcome the steady emergence of new, highly talented generations of Muslims and non-Muslims who appreciate the heritage of world-class buildings and spaces which characterized the Ummah for so many centuries - and who understand the power of Islamic cultural well-springs to inspire continuing accomplishment.

The talents and insights of these new generations of young creative people will be an enormously valuable resource in the years ahead. It is essential that the decision makers of the Ummah and of their development partners should trust and embrace these new generations of architectural professionals. It is my deep conviction that if this is done, while errors may be made, the outcomes will surely include a sense of authenticity, inspiration, heritage and creativity which will restore to many areas of the Ummah a sense of the architectural greatness of its past. If that happens, then the impact on the physical environment of world civilizations, well beyond the frontiers of the Ummah, will also be profound.

I believe that the awards we present today will facilitate that process - and amplify its impact.

We are proud that you who gather here are among the strong supporters of this award. We salute you for that support, even as we thank you for your participation in this great anniversary event - in this distinctive and forward-looking city.

Thank You.



## **Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Banquet Hosted in Honour of President Museveni (Kampala, Uganda) 22 August 2007**

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda and the First Lady  
Your Excellency the President of the Central African Republic and the First Lady  
Your Excellency President Chissano, former President of Mozambique and UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy  
Your Excellency the Vice President  
Right Honourable Speaker  
Her Lordship the Deputy Chief Justice  
Right Honourable Prime Minister  
Your Worship the Mayor of Kampala  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

My heartfelt thanks go out to all of you tonight - for being a part of this gathering - for your generous welcome and warm hospitality here in Uganda, and for all that you do - each in your own circle of influence, for the betterment of your communities and the progress of society.

This is a special evening for me - the closing moments of the first of my Golden Jubilee visits to places which have had particular meaning for the Ismaili Community, for the institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network, and for me, personally, over the past half century.

A Jubilee celebration is a time for reflection. And it is also a time to look ahead.

As I look back to my early years of my Imamate, I would note that I came to this position at the very moment when the developing world was first emerging as an important, independent voice in world affairs. The late 1950's and the early 1960's marked the end of the colonial era in most of the developing world. It was a time of enormous hope - but also of fearful challenge. I remember thinking to myself that, at no time in human history had so many nations achieved independence - and introduced new systems of government - in such a short period of time. I remember the sense of awe I felt - indeed of diffidence - close to a sense of vertigo - when I asked myself how so many poor states would create the political structures - or find the human and material resources, which would give real meaning to their independence.

In Uganda, it was also a time of special hope - but also one of special challenge.

I describe those memories tonight not out of any sentimental nostalgia for the past - for a time when both my Imamate and the era of African independence both seemed so very young. No - I mention these memories because I continue to feel so deeply about Africa's enormous potential. These feelings, in fact, have come to form what I would describe as a core conviction.

My optimism grows out of several observations: beginning with the continuing rich potential of Africa's natural resources - including the remarkable talents and the resilient spirit of its peoples. I would also note the progress which has been made in the economic field, as exemplified by the recent growth rates in Uganda. I am encouraged by the welcoming attitude which has developed in Uganda, and elsewhere across the Continent, for private investment and for public/private partnerships. I would mention also, especially in the Ugandan context, the growing potential for cross-border cooperation, including Uganda's

role in international institutions - from the East African Community to the British Commonwealth.

In discussing economic progress, I especially want to note the strong commitment which has been made to improving the quality of life in the great rural areas of this country, places where both the opportunities and the difficulties, the hopes and the hurdles, are particularly high. Yet - here in Uganda, as in the other countries I have recently visited, I see an intensified determination to overcome those obstacles - and to deliver practical results.

I had the honour yesterday of joining President Museveni in laying the foundation stone for one of the largest power projects in African history, a great hydroelectric facility at Bujagali. That project has been a dream in Uganda for many years. When that dream was renewed more recently, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development took on the leading role - acting as a catalyst for a wide array of public and private partners. It was an impressive experience - not only because it showed the depth and breadth of support for Africa's future, but also because of the Uganda government's determination to clear the path for this project, in innovative and effective ways. The result was that our ceremony yesterday came less than two years after we became officially involved - a remarkably short time as these things go - reflecting a healthy sense of urgency.

There are other reasons, too, for my positive outlook. One of the most important is a growing spirit of pluralism - which is especially vibrant here in Uganda, growing out of this country's rich diversity - of language, of ethnicity, of faith, and even of social philosophy. It is a diversity which is mirrored in the diversity of the Ismaili Jamat and the whole of the Islamic Ummah in Uganda. This rich diversity is also reflected, I am pleased to note, in the makeup of our gathering this evening.

My hope for Uganda is that it can continue to build a culture which sees diversity and difference, peacefully expressed, as a source of potential strength rather than a cause of harmful division. Even as we take deep pride in our own personal traditions - we also know that we can learn a great deal from those who have come from different backgrounds and who hold different perspectives.

As this resurgent cosmopolitan spirit continues to develop in Uganda, it can be a profound source of strength for this country - and indeed for the entire world.

All across our planet in these early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people are learning to live with other people who are different from them - but who are suddenly and closely connected. This is happening because of the radical technological revolution in the way the world communicates - and also because of the unprecedented movement of populations from region to region. In such a world, our new neighbours are those who may live across the world as well as those who may live across the street.

I believe the people of Uganda can give to the world, in the years ahead, the gift of a vibrant example - as a society which has overcome the worst experiences of past intolerance and embraced the abundant promise of a pluralistic but united future.

If one key to unlocking the potential of Uganda, and of all of Africa, is a spirit of pluralism, then another key should be a commitment to excellence. There was a time, earlier in my Imamate, when mediocrity was considered tolerable here because it was "good enough for Africa". I remember my apprehension at the time, my concern that among all the goals that were set for Africa in those days, the achievement of normal world-class standards was not seen as realistic. But in the rapidly globalizing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the progress of

every country and continent will depend on its ability to meet universal standards. To settle for less is an increasingly dangerous decision.

This commitment to achieve global norms, and even to excel, can wisely begin with a nation's educational institutions - and the preparation of our future leaders. Here Uganda's proud traditions - at Makerere University - and other great institutions - should be of special motivation and strength.

As you know, a number of the new initiatives which I have announced on behalf of the Aga Khan Development Network this past week have been in the educational area.

When we invest in education we are investing in people - and no investment can pay greater dividends. This is why the Aga Khan University - building on its successes in Pakistan - and in eight other countries where it now has teaching sites - is determined to establish a major new presence in East Africa. We announced just the other evening a plan for creating this campus in Arusha - a central point from which it will be able to serve the entire region - as a true center of international excellence.

A few days earlier, we announced the creation of a new Faculty of Health Sciences, based at the Aga Khan University in Nairobi. And earlier today we announced plans for an Aga Khan Academy campus here in Kampala - to train teachers and developing students for leadership positions. In all of these efforts, we see ourselves as partners with the people of East Africa.

It is in that spirit of partnership, then, that I conclude this journey, grateful for what we have been able to do together in the past, excited by the things we will be attempting to do together in the future, and looking forward to many return visits to this very special place.

Thank you.

## **Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy Kampala – 22 August 2007**

Your Excellency Vice President Professor Gilbert Bukenya  
The Right Honourable Speaker  
The Right Honourable Prime Minister  
Your Worship the Mayor  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

It is a very great joy for me to be here today, and I am most grateful to the Vice President - and all of you - for joining us. This is indeed a special celebration - in a truly magnificent setting.

Let me extend, at the very start, my heartfelt thanks to the person who made this beautiful site available for the building of a new Aga Khan Academy. He is Amirali Karmali, known affectionately throughout Uganda as Mzee Mukwano. We are most deeply grateful to Amirali and his family for their extraordinary generosity.

I know I speak for everyone here in describing this gift as a truly inspiring one.

The Quran tells us that signs of Allah's Sovereignty are found in the contemplation of His Creation - in the heavens and the earth, the night and the day, the clouds and the seas, the winds and the waters. I am confident that future generations of students and teachers - who will come to this Academy from around the region and around the world - will feel a profound sense of inspiration as they look out on this superb landscape.

As you have heard, the new Academy in Kampala will be one of 18 Academies in 14 countries which will be developed over the next 15 years. Together, they will constitute an inter-related community of learning - exchanging students and teachers, sharing ideas and insights. And they will also share a variety of environmental experiences. Some, like the first Academy at Mombasa, will be in ocean-side settings, other will be placed in high mountain environments, still others will be built in desert terrains or forested areas - or, as in Kampala, at the side of a beautiful lake. As our students and teachers experience these remarkable surroundings, I hope they will develop what I would call a sense of "environmental pluralism"- to accompany the appreciation for cultural pluralism which we will also hope will be one of the programme's hallmarks.

As you know, these ceremonies are part of my Golden Jubilee observances. I have welcomed this anniversary year as an opportunity to think back over the past half century - to reflect on the challenges we have faced, the goals we have met, and the lessons we have been learning. In this process, I will be traveling to places which have been of particular importance for me, and for the Ismaili community, and it is most appropriate that Uganda is among the first of these visits.

As I make these journeys, I am also announcing a number of new projects - including this Academy in Kampala. This is in keeping with our tradition on Jubilee occasions of honoring the past by seizing the future - and at the same time, making new plans in an historical context.

A strong commitment to learning has been at the very root of Ismaili and Islamic culture, going back to the first Imam of the Shia Muslims, the fourth Caliph, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib, and his emphasis on knowledge. The tradition was renewed over many centuries in many places by the Abbasids, the Fatimids, the Safavids – the Mughals, the Uzbeks and the Ottomans. During his Imamate, my late Grandfather started some 300 schools in this region. The Academies Programme is thus planted in rich historic soil.

This is a time of exciting dreams and for our Academies programme - as we begin the long process of identifying sites, developing partnerships, and designing campuses. This will be an

intricate and demanding process, but we undertake it with a certain confidence. That confidence was re-inforced, I might note, by the excellent scores which our first class of Academy graduates, in Mombasa, have just achieved on their International Baccalaureate exams.

One of the central precepts of the International Baccalaureate Programme is to honour world-class standards, while also respecting cultural diversity. In this respect, its approach mirrors that of the Aga Khan Academies - to help students combine a cosmopolitan spirit on the one hand, with a strong sense of cultural identity on the other.

And is that not one of the secrets to success and fulfillment in our rapidly globalising world? Everyone, everywhere, faces the challenge of engaging - productively and creatively - in the global arena of action and ideas, while also respecting the unique character of family roots and cultural traditions.

As students seek to enter the Academies programme, they will be judged on merit, not by their financial resources. As students leave this programme, they will move on to quality universities - and then to positions of social leadership. We expect many of our Kampala graduates to become pillars of Ugandan public and private institutions, a homegrown cadre of leadership.

Let me also underscore at this point Uganda's own history as a centre of learning - the home of great international institutions like Makerere University, a traditional source of indigenous African leadership. Today, the Government of Uganda is making a commendable commitment to universal public education. It is a time of renewal in Ugandan education, and we hope the Aga Khan Academy in Kampala will contribute to that process.

Just yesterday, we marked another key step in building Uganda's future as we laid the foundation stone for a new hydroelectric energy project in Bujagali. I noted there that lasting economic growth will be self-destructive if it is not matched by the growth of the power supply.

The same thing is true in the world of human resources, where people supply the power. If economic growth propels us down a road for which our future leaders are not prepared, then we will never sustain our advances.

This is why so many of the long-term investments we have been making, throughout the developing world, are investments in education. They have ranged from Madrasa programmes for early childhood development, to primary schools in disadvantaged communities, to leadership training programmes and scholarships for promising young professionals. At the tertiary level, we have recently launched the University of Central Asia. This is an international agreement between Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan and the Ismaili Imamat to create a new institution of higher learning specialised in mountain societies. And, as you may know, we are also planning to expand the Aga Khan University - founded almost 25 years ago in Pakistan - and now an active presence in nine different countries. Just this week, the Aga Khan University announced its plans for a new Faculty of Health Sciences in Nairobi, as well as a major new East African campus in Arusha.

All of our initiatives are built around a pragmatic, experience-based, and innovative approach to education - an effort to refresh and replace narrower approaches which have sometimes mis-served the developing world. Education, in the past, has too often been a matter of indoctrination - advancing the demands of dogma instead of the disciplines of reason.

What is required today, in my view, is an educational approach which is the polar opposite of indoctrination - one that nurtures the spirit of anticipation and agility, adaptability and adventure.

To this end, the Academies curriculum will encourage its students in the practice of what I would call "Intellectual Humility, " recognizing that what they do not know will always be greater than what they know - and launching an ardent, lifelong search for the knowledge they

will need. In an age of accelerating change, the most important thing any student can learn is how to go on learning.

Let me touch briefly, on two particular features of the Academy vision. The first is its emphasis on the training of teachers. We plan to create on our campuses a series of Professional Development Centres, devoted to “educating the educators,” and to pedagogical research. On the Kampala campus, in fact, we will begin with teacher education - establishing the Professional Development Centre, even before we enroll the students. We will put the horse before the cart, where it should be. We are confident that good teachers and best practices will radiate out from this Centre into the wider world of education.

A second feature is our emphasis on the value of a residential campus, where students not only learn together but also live together. I have noted a recent study by The World Bank which found that the quantity of time or money spent on education was less important than the quality of specific educational experiences. Extraordinary teachers and exceptional companions are the key to such experiences.

The final point I would emphasize today, above all else, is our uncompromising commitment to Quality-- in every aspect of the Academy experience. Our hallmark will be quality students, quality instructors, quality facilities - an unwavering devotion to world-class standards. Let the day be long past when some could excuse mediocrity by saying that it was “good enough for Africa”.

The particular challenge of the Aga Khan Academies will be to provide an exceptional education for exceptional students. We cannot claim that they will directly provide a major proportion of tomorrow’s leaders - or tomorrow’s teachers. But we believe they can help - as centres of energy and influence for the entire educational enterprise.

We look forward to working with the government and the people of Uganda as we pursue these great objectives. I know we will all remember this important ceremony at this beautiful place as a special moment in this process. Again, we are most grateful to all of you for sharing it with us.

Thank you.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the  
Foundation Stone Ceremony of the Bujagali Hydropower Project  
Uganda – 21 August 2007**

Your Excellency President Museveni  
Honourable David Migreko, Minister for Energy  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

Let me begin by expressing my warmest thanks for your kind introduction and for this wonderful welcome.

What a great pleasure it is to be a part of this historic occasion. I am particularly pleased that it comes during my Golden Jubilee year - and indeed at the outset of my Jubilee visits to places in the world which have had special meaning to me - and to the Ismaili community - over the past fifty years. I know I will always remember this day - and this place - as a special highlight of these celebrations.

The laying of this foundation stone is indeed an historic moment. The project we celebrate today is an unprecedented endeavour.

As Nizar Juma has pointed out, it represents the largest single private sector investment of any sort in East Africa and the largest independent power project in sub-Saharan Africa. I understand it is the largest single power investment ever made by the International Finance Corporation - anywhere in the world.

I must tell you that the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development is very proud to have been the catalyst in advancing this project - and very happy to be a continuing part of it.

Our ceremony today is both an ending and a beginning.

It marks the end of a long road of dreams and plans, discussions and debates, negotiations and bids, adjustments and agreements - with a wide array of partners. It is thus a moment for extending warmest thanks and congratulations to everyone who has participated in this process - some of you for some time now - from both the public sector and the private sector - from Uganda, and from so many other countries.

We are deeply indebted to you all - for your patience and your stamina, for your imagination and your vision, and for your commitment to Uganda and East Africa.

You have already heard about President Museveni's suggestion that a statue at State House might have been a good incentive for pushing this project along. I might observe, however, that if every person who played a key role in the project's success were to be awarded a statue, the State House in Kampala would have to add a whole additional wing.

What has emerged from this intense, yet tireless, effort, in a relatively short period of time, was not a statue or a building - but something which can still be described as a truly splendid structure.

This will soon be true in a physical sense here at Bujagali. But it is also true in an organizational and a financial sense, as support for this project has been assembled from so many institutions and so many places.

It has not been easy through the years to attract traditional, private investment capital into ambitious infrastructure projects in the developing world. And yet, with the strong commitment of the Government of Uganda, the critical backing of the Global Power and other private investors, and with the key support of the World Bank Group and other highly-respected multi-national lenders, the debt and equity financing for this project was actually over-subscribed!

What a wonderful breakthrough this has been - and what a powerful model it can be for the future!!

But if today marks the culmination of an intricate process of planning and organization, it also marks the beginning of another demanding journey - the process of executing and instituting our plans. At the end of this road, however, lies an exciting new world of opportunity - for the people of this region, for the people of this country, and indeed for the whole of East Africa.

As you know, the government and the people of Uganda have made substantial economic strides in recent years - and they are to be congratulated for these achievements. But in Uganda - as in many other countries - the greater those strides may be, the more they bump up against a formidable barrier - a shortage of dependable power. The greater the progress in other fields, the more severe this problem can become - as the inevitable load-shedding and loss of power too frequently reminds us.

This problem, of course, extends well beyond Uganda. It is striking to me that the continent of Africa, with fully one-sixth of the world's population, produces only four percent of the world's electricity - and most of that is in its northernmost and southernmost countries. The great issue of development, everywhere in the world, is whether the power supply will grow more quickly than the economy, or whether economic growth will outstrip the power supply. Uganda has been suffering from the latter condition - and the consequences have been grave.

Today, only five percent of the total population of Uganda - and only one percent of the rural population - have access to the grid supply of electric power. Even for those who do have access, electricity tariffs have more than doubled in the last four years. These skyrocketing costs work to reinforce the cycle of poverty for millions, and they badly impair the ability of Ugandan companies to compete in international markets - and thus to expand employment. The result of continuing power shortfalls can be a downward spiral of disappointment and discouragement.

The Bujagali project was not merely a desirable option as we began to examine it a few years ago. It was a fundamental necessity.

But just imagine for a moment the transformation that can take place when the cost of power is cut by more than half, as it will be in the early stages of this project, and then is later cut in half again. Think of the difference it will make when the supply of power is adequate to the needs, and massive load-shedding becomes a distant memory.

Bujagali alone will not accomplish our goals, of course. The energy challenge - here and elsewhere - will require a multi-faceted response, including bold innovations in the way we both produce and consume energy.

I believe that the Bujagali project will propel a great chain of positive developments - an exciting upward spiral.

Let me mention one other positive aspect of the Bujagali project.

Everywhere in the world today, people are searching for ways to reduce the threat of global warming both by limiting greenhouse gas emissions and by fighting the blight of deforestation. The key to both efforts is to move away from plant and fossil fuels, and to depend instead on renewable energy sources. Hydro electric power fulfills that goal. It is "clean" energy - advancing sustainable development while minimizing its environmental impact.

If this were not the case, we would not have taken up this project, and we could not have attracted such a wide range of public-minded supporters to join in this endeavour. We feel deeply that environmental goals and development goals must be part of a Complementary Agenda - we can serve one set of goals only if we also serve the other. We are proud that the Bujagali project advances that Complementary Agenda.



The project we launch today is just one example of how the Aga Khan fund for Economic Development is responding to its mandate as an agent of change and growth - from Afghanistan to Tajikistan, from Mozambique to Mali. Another example in the energy field is the West Nile Rural Electrification Company, as has already been mentioned.

From the other side of the Continent, we have just recently learnt that the Ivory Coast Government has approved a major expansion of our Azito power project - one that will enable Azito to help meet the growing needs of the Ivory Coast and respond to the critical energy shortfalls in the neighboring country of Mali.

AKFED's constant goal is to build institutions of enduring excellence, embracing state-of-the-art technologies and world-class standards. In many cases, AKFED's initial investments have come in situations which were too uncertain for traditional private investors. Often, these projects were so effectively transformed that they could later be floated publicly on national stock exchanges in Asia and Africa.

AKFED works in many fields - from insurance, banking, micro-finance, and media, to a variety of manufacturing enterprises, to the tourism and leisure sector. It is presently creating four new national air transport companies, linking various countries throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Step by step, each of AKFED's projects will make a special contribution, we trust, to an upward spiral of progress. And the project we will develop here - at Bujagali, will be a particularly proud example.

From the very beginnings of civilization, the use of water - intelligently, respectfully, and creatively - has been at the very center of human concerns. The Nile River itself has been a great source and sustainer of life for thousands of years. Today, we repeat and renew that ancient story once again as we lay this Foundation Stone - and thus signal the opening of a new era in African history.

I salute all of you, respectfully and gratefully, for sharing with us in this great endeavour.

Thank you.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the  
State Banquet, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania  
18 August 2007**

Your Excellency President Kikwete  
Honourable Ministers  
Distinguished Guests

Let me begin my comments this evening by thanking His Excellency the President for his exceptionally warm and generous speech and comments about me – I am deeply touched President. I would also like to say how much I have enjoyed these last few days in Tanzania. It is always a great personal pleasure for me to be here - and I am most deeply grateful for your wonderful welcome and your gracious hospitality.

The enormous honour you have shown me, through the creation of a special stamp to mark this Jubilee, is something I profoundly appreciate and will always remember. This Jubilee year provides such an ideal opportunity for me to visit places which have been particularly important to me - and to the Ismaili community - throughout my Imamate. I am taking these opportunities to revisit some of the important themes of these fifty years, and to announce a number of new initiatives.

The story of the Ismaili community in East Africa goes back well before the start of my Imamate, at least as far back as the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Various Aga Khan institutions have been active here for more than 100 years - ever since my late Grandfather founded the first Aga Khan Girls School in Zanzibar in 1905.

Today, our work here takes many forms: We work in the medical field through the Aga Khan Hospital and an array of clinics and dispensaries. Our educational institutions serve students and teachers of all ages. We are active in banking and microfinance, insurance, tourism, leisure and cultural preservation. We have been deeply involved in Tanzania.

I am always heartened, as I return to a place I have known so well, to hear from local friends about the progress which has been made since my last visit. I suppose there are times when enthusiastic friends might even exaggerate their stories - but usually, by the time I leave, I have a pretty clear fix on how things are going!

I must tell you that my conclusion tonight, is that the people and leaders of Tanzania deserve great credit. You have been able, under difficult conditions, to maintain national stability, to consolidate many recent reforms, and to build a sense of hopeful continuity. Surely one of Tanzania's great gifts to the world has been its example in building a strong spirit of pluralism among a population balanced almost equally between Christian and Muslim peoples. It is not surprising that a major new survey of world opinion ranks Tanzania among the highest countries in Africa in expressing faith in its democratic future.

I have also been impressed by the formulation of your Millennium Development Goals - and your success in meeting some of them - whether it is the increase of more than 6% in the GDP this year, or the fact that immunization rates have climbed past 80%, or that primary school enrolment rates now exceed 90%.

But each forward step must lead on to new steps. Increasing primary school enrolments, for example, leads inevitably to the need for more secondary schooling. As young people enter the work force here - two thirds of a million each year - the fact that only 6 percent of them enter the wage and employment sector remains an immense challenge. With effective new education and training programs, however, this enormous source of national strength could be unlocked.

As you know, the field of education has been a central concern of my Tradition - going back to the great institutions of learning which were such a distinguished part of Islamic history for so many centuries.

Our current efforts in education have centred on developing an integrated international system of schools, ranging from the pre-school efforts of our Madrasa program, to primary and secondary schooling through our expanding Academies programme, including some 18 schools in 14 countries of Africa and Asia. These efforts culminate in the tertiary programs of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

One cannot hope to build quality schools, of course, without quality instructors. That is why our Academies program includes a Professional Development Centre (PDC) on each of its campuses, with a focus on educating the educators. In many cases, the PDC will be opened and training teachers well before the Academy students are enrolled. Similarly, the Aga Khan University has already opened the Institute for Educational Development here in Dar es Salaam for the purpose of teacher training and pedagogical research.

We realize that these efforts in themselves will not remedy the human resource challenges in Tanzania. But we do believe they can have a great “multiplier effect”, serving as laboratories, models, and motivators.

The challenge of development - in education as in other fields - is highly complex -and it calls for complex responses. We must replace old, dogmatic prescriptions with new pragmatic approaches.

This is why I say so often that the challenge of development must be a shared experience, one that rests on a “cosmopolitan ethic”, and proceeds in a spirit of partnership. In this light, Tanzania’s progress in building a pluralistic society is an important foundation stone for the future.

The commitment to cooperate is not only essential among peoples of different ethnic or religious backgrounds, or different classes, or philosophies. We must also build stronger bridges of cooperation between different sectors of social and economic leadership. I am pleased, for example, to be hearing more and more these days about “public/private partnerships. As we learn to work across the public/private dividing line, we can do things together we could never do separately.

One effective way in which governments can contribute to this goal is by providing a strong enabling environment for private initiatives - at the local, national and regional levels.

It has been a hallmark of Ismaili thinking that the peoples of East Africa can often be most effective when they work and think on a region-wide basis. Many of our AKDN initiatives, in fact, have been organized, for some years now, on a region-wide basis - and with great success.

Stronger regional institutions in East Africa can do a great deal to facilitate development, but for this to happen, and for the East African Community to thrive, the spirit of partnership must also be present when governments deal with one another.

We hear constantly these days about the process of “globalization” in our world. But we should note that this is also an age of enormous “regionalization”. It is happening in Europe. It is happening in Southeast Asia. It is happening in North America – and in many other places. And, of course, it is also happening in Africa.

East Africa is a place where regionalization can have a particularly beneficial impact. It is good to know that the leaders of the five major countries of East Africa have all indicated their strong support for regionalization. The moment is a promising one.

I mentioned earlier that my Jubilee visits would be opportunities to talk about future plans - and I have done so tonight by emphasizing the importance of a pragmatic approach to development, the value of public/private partnerships, and the importance of building a stronger East African Community.

Let me conclude by describing something more concrete - one of the most far-reaching of our new initiatives. I do this out of my conviction that the best way to celebrate the past is to grasp the future - and that it is good to make new plans with an eye on their historical context.

It is in that spirit that I am pleased to announce the Aga Khan University's decision to build a major new campus in East Africa--and to locate that campus in Arusha.

This project is, I believe, the first major private sector investment in the East African Community since the formal joining of Rwanda and Burundi. It is the biggest expansion step for the Aga Khan University since it opened in Pakistan almost 25 years ago.

This new campus will be built over a period of fifteen years with a total investment of some 450 million dollars. It will include a new Faculty of Arts and Sciences and several graduate professional schools. It will be committed to teaching and research of world-class standards.

Building a university is a very exciting process. But it is no small undertaking!! It requires enormous resources of time, talent and treasure. Above all, it requires a sustained long-term commitment. It is not a sprint—it is a marathon.

But we undertake this effort with some confidence, bolstered by evidence of past success. We are pleased, for example, that the Aga Khan University has been ranked as the best university in Pakistan - and that its medical graduates score in the top 10% on licensing exams in the United States. We are also pleased that the first class of Aga Khan Academy graduates in Mombasa has scored impressively in the International Baccalaureate exams.

Even in the planning stages, building a new University campus is an exercise in complexity. As we undertake this unprecedented task, we will need to work closely with the Tanzanian government on several fronts. One key challenge will be in the area of land use planning, zoning, and infrastructure—providing all the facilities a thriving new community will need. Introducing a new university in Arusha will actually change the way a city grows and the way people live in that environment. A second area is the preparation of students who can compete effectively for admission –and who can rely on loan and scholarship programs to help support their schooling. We are looking at a means blind admissions process. Any young child male or female who has the intellectual potential to enter that university must be able to have access that that university. Thirdly, but just as importantly, region-wide accreditation will be critical —so that the University's degrees are recognized and respected across all of East Africa and of course as of the first of July that includes Rwanda and Burundi.

We hope that the University will be a source of effective leadership for the East Africa of tomorrow. We envision students coming from many directions and many backgrounds—living and studying together in a special regional environment, and then going out again with a strengthened sense of personal empowerment and social responsibility.

The plans I have been discussing reflect our faith in the future of this region and this continent. In a very specific way, they also reflect our faith in the future of Tanzania and of Arusha - not only as an organizing point for regional affairs, but also as an international focal point of Ideas and Innovation.

Our dream is that the Aga Khan University - as it expands in East Africa and elsewhere - will play a central role in the great Knowledge Society of tomorrow.

This vision for the future is important to me personally because it so fittingly honors the past. The great chapters of Islamic history, after all, demonstrate how peoples of a common faith, spread widely throughout the world, have flourished when they embraced and advanced a cosmopolitan Society of Knowledge.

As the 49 th Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, I often look back to the words of the Fourth Caliph, who was also the first Imam of the Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Listen to Hazrat Ali's words: "No honour is like knowledge. No belief is like modesty and patience. No attainment is like humility. No power is like forbearance. And no support is more reliable than consultation".

The passage - beginning with the word "knowledge" and ending with the word "consultation"- sums up my message to you tonight. It is my prayer that all of us - with a common commitment to knowledge - and in a continuing spirit of consultation - can go forward together to meet our great challenges.

Thank You

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Madrasa Programme  
Mombasa – 14 August 2007**

The Honorable Noah Wakesa, Minister for Science and Technology  
Honourable Minister Haroun Suleiman  
Leaders of the Ummah  
Distinguished Guests

My thanks go out to all of you - not only for joining us here today, but for making this day possible. For some of you, this event marks the culmination of a 25 year story - a story that began with the sowing of some very small but well selected seeds a quarter of a century ago - seeds which took root and now have blossomed into an educational success story which can serve as an inspiring example to educators everywhere.

As you know, I have completed 50 years as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. Sometimes it's not so easy these days to remember all the way back to 1957. But I have no problem at all remembering my initial meetings 25 years ago here in Mombassa with the Ummah leadership - with leaders of the Aga Khan Foundation, and with others of you who shared what was then an innovative insight. You shared a conviction that the way in which children are educated in their earliest years is a key which can unlock the doors of opportunity for the rest of their lives.

A deep concern for Knowledge - and the best ways of sharing Knowledge - goes back to the very roots of the Islamic tradition. When we think of our proud educational traditions, however, we often think first about the great Universities and Libraries which became centers of Islamic culture down through the centuries - including in our time the Aga Khan University which now has teaching centres in eight different countries. Or we think of schools which prepare students for university life - as our Aga Khan Academy programme is designed to do.

But we sometimes give too little attention to the schools which prepare young children for life itself - in all of its holistic dimensions. And yet the evidence accumulates steadily showing that an investment made in the earliest, pre-school years can bring enormous dividends as a child proceeds from one level of education to another.

We have particularly strong evidence that this has been the case for the Madrasa programme in this community - and in the other communities and the other countries to which these concepts now have spread. From the seed that was planted here in the Coastal Region some 25 years ago - when Bi-Swafiya Said received her grant from the Aga Khan Foundation - the East African Madrasa Programme has grown to include 203 pre-schools, with nearly 800 teachers, reaching some 30,000 households and serving more than 54,000 children. This is truly an inspiring story.

It is also important to note some additional distinctions concerning this program. One is the Programme's pluralistic, inclusive approach - embracing Muslim and non-Muslim children alike - and helping all of them to learn important lessons about diversity. Indeed, it is good to see that parents of different faiths are represented on the School Management Committees.

It is striking that modern neuro-sciences have demonstrated that long before the age of 6, children are aware of the different cultural backgrounds amongst each other in their classes. It is thus before that age that pluralism can be instilled as a life value.

Another point worth noting is the rigour with which quality has been assured - with strong Madrasa Resource Centres helping to set goals and standards, and rewarding their achievement through a school graduation program. The progressive nature of this programme is also evident in the fact that women have played such a large part in its success - and that young girls make up such a significant part of the pre-school population. And I would point out as well that the programme's success has occurred largely among poor, rural populations - where both the needs and the obstacles are often greatest. Our challenge now will be to ensure the programme's sustainability - and its replicability.

We gather today, then, in a spirit of enormous gratitude - to the Pioneers who led this effort, the Ummah and Jamat leadership, the donor community, the government leaders who have been involved, and so many dedicated volunteers - from the very beginnings of the programme right down to the present day. In the end, the story of the Madrasa Programme has been a story of personal commitment.

And we know that the story must go on. The dream will continue to unfold. And the work which all of you have been doing will continue to resonate in the thousands of lives you have touched and shaped—and in the lives of their children and grandchildren.

Thank You.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Residential Campus Foundation  
Stone Laying Ceremony, Aga Khan Academy (Mombasa, Kenya)  
14 August 2007**

The Honourable Professor George Saitoti,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Honourable Member of Parliament,  
The Provincial Commissioner,  
Your Worship the Mayor,  
Distinguished Guests:

I am most grateful to all of you for joining in this celebration. It was just one month ago that my Golden Jubilee observances began. It seemed appropriate to mark this Jubilee year by visiting some of the places which have been most important to the story of the past half century.

Our meeting today is among the first of those visits - and that is as it should be. For one thing, Kenya is the country where I spent a good part of my youngest years. It is also a place which has played a central role in the life of the Ismaili community - and in so many activities of the Aga Khan Development Network. When I come to Kenya, I always feel especially at home.

The project which brings us here is one in which I have taken a special interest, and for which I have especially strong hopes. I refer of course to the Aga Khan Academies programme, which was launched here in Mombasa some four years ago.

What was described as a dream when we gathered to open the first Academy is now much better described as a concrete plan—one which extends out in time and space—to a day some ten years from now when the Academy network will embrace some 18 campuses across 14 countries in the developing world. But when that day comes, Mombasa will be remembered as the place where it all began.

But even as the Academies program moves on to new beginnings in new locations -scouting out sites, purchasing land, creating partnerships, planning campuses, and laying cornerstones—we continue to expand its work in Mombasa. Here too we are laying a new cornerstone—the first step in the building of a residential campus which will take this school into a new era—as it broadens its own geographic reach. We do this now with special confidence—based on what this school has already achieved.

The latest evidence is just a month or two old—the results of the recent International Baccalaureate exams -- which are used to measure academic accomplishment at some 1800 schools around the world. To have our very first class of students perform so well—as you have heard—is a great tribute to the students—and to their teachers. And it is also good to know that their academic prowess is matched by their accomplishments in athletics and other co-curricular activities—as well as the qualities of personal character which they exemplify.

A central premise of the Academies program is that students will enter based solely on merit—not because of financial resources or family background. Our central hope for the program is that when students leave the Academies, they will move on to high quality universities—and then to positions of social leadership. As they go through life, we expect them to reflect the central values of the programme—a strong ethical orientation, a sense of personal discipline and civic obligation, and an appreciation for diversity and pluralism.

You may have heard about a recent survey of public attitudes throughout the world conducted by the Pew Foundation and the New York Times—and released just three weeks ago. The results for Africa, in particular, came as a surprise to many, because they showed an unexpected degree of hope for the future—despite a realistic awareness of present problems. The people of Kenya, in particular, ranked among the more hopeful of African citizens in feeling that their children would someday be better off than people are now. What is it that explains this optimism? Among other things, it reflects a faith in the inherent capacities of the younger generation—a sense of what their natural talents can accomplish if they are given



the right opportunities.

And that of course is what the Academies program is all about. That is why we want to do everything we can to extend this programme to include more students – and an even broader range of experiences. In this ambition, we are heartened by an important new World Bank study which indicates that it is not the quantity of time or money that leads to educational success, but rather the quality of specific educational experiences. The stimulus provided by extraordinary teachers and exceptional companions is most important.

The World Bank study confirms a central tenet of our Academies planning, our confidence in the value of a residential campus. We believe that students draw valuable life lessons not only from learning together but also from living together—especially if the mix of students is broadly diversified. The laying of this cornerstone symbolizes this commitment to a residential experience. In addition, we are also committed to building an international network of similar schools—so that those who are enrolled on any one campus will also be able to be study at other Academy sites.

These plans constitute a bold step into the future. But they also reflect a deep respect for the past. The commitments we are discussing today grow out of values which have been central to the history of the Ismaili community in particular and of Islamic cultures in general. My personal interest in education as a key to future grows out of my family history—including the precedent set by my late grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, who began just a century ago to build a network of some 300 schools in South Asia, the Middle East and East Africa.

These efforts, in turn, extended a tradition which stretches back over a millennium and third--to the very first hereditary Imam of the Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and his elevation of Knowledge as a central quality in the life of faithful Muslims. As early as the 8 th century, the original Abbasids honored that prescription by creating a series of academies and libraries where new knowledge was honoured. The Fatimids continued this work from Cairo in the 10 th century. Later Ghazni, in Afghanistan became an important learning center. By the middle of the next millennium, an international culture of Knowledge and Learning was thriving under Islamic influence—ranging from the Safavid centers in Iran to the Mughal courts of India and the Uzbek court in Bukhara. In the 19 th century, the Ottoman caliphs added another chapter to this story. And so did my grandfather in his role as the Ismaili Imam.

Against this background, you can understand why the promising start of our Academies programme here in Mombasa means so much to me—and why this ceremony is such an appropriate part of our Jubilee celebrations.

A Golden Jubilee naturally calls on us to rise above the concerns of the immediate present—and to extend our historical vision. As we do so, we recognize that even the small beginnings we undertake today may make a profound impact in decades to come.

One of my institutional commitments has been to help the developing world explore the keys to social and economic progress. But sadly, over these fifty years, I have seen too many developing countries search for those keys in disappointing directions. For a while, it was thought to be enough to simply throw off the yoke of colonialism and to reassert an indigenous cultural identity. Education, from that point of view, became largely a matter of tapping into ancient wisdom. In other cases, the promises of a charismatic ruler would capture the public imagination, reducing the role of education to relative insignificance.

Over time, other potential cures would have their moments in the sun, ranging from the siren songs of state socialism on one side to the allure of unrestrained capitalism on the other. The demands of dogma came to replace the disciplines of reason – and education too often turned into indoctrination.

But as a wise observer once said, it's not so much what we don't know that hurts us, but also all those things that we are sure we know—but which are just not so. And so it was with many of the so-called certainties of the past.

What the modern world requires, however, is an approach which is the polar opposite of indoctrination. As world affairs have been steadily transformed by the process of globalization, the ability to command and control has become less important than the ability to anticipate, connect and respond. And educational institutions which can instill and enhance those capacities have become essential to effective development.

If the Aga Khan Academies are to fulfill their mission, they must work in these pragmatic directions. To this end, the Academies curriculum seeks to instill a habit of intellectual humility which constantly opens young minds to what it is that they do not know, and which sends them on a wide and rigorous search for new knowledge. In my view, the most important thing a student can learn in any educational institution is the ability to keep on learning.

At the same time, our curriculum also places a strong emphasis on the ethical and spiritual dimensions of life, as well as a more complex understanding of how global economics work, a focus on comparative political systems, and a broad exposure to a variety of world cultures, including the Study of Muslim Civilizations.

Let me address at this point one of the questions which is most often asked about the Academies programme, and that is whether its emphasis on educating future leaders in some way ignores or misrepresents the interests of a broader public

My response rests on the conviction that the key to the success of democratic societies in the years ahead will be the effectiveness of democratic leadership—not only in government, but also in the private sector in civil society. In a world of bewildering complexity and a mind-bending pace of change, no institution can succeed without wise leadership—and specialized expertise. Yet, too many of those who ought to be effective leaders in years to come are being left behind in the here and now. Because good schools are not available to them early in life, they are often excluded from such opportunities as they grow older.

Does this mean that we should focus only on educating a leadership elite? Not by any means. Broad public education is still a basic obligation of a just society—and I commend all those who are engaged in that noble enterprise. Public education and private education should not be seen as rivals in building a better society—but rather as important collaborators.

But I also believe that the interests of society will be best served if its outstanding future leaders can be given a truly outstanding education—and often it is a specialized private school which is best positioned to fulfill that goal.

How should a healthy society determine who will lead it? For much of human history, leaders were born into their roles, or fought their way in – or bought their way in. Leadership traditionally has depended on physical power, or accumulated wealth, or inherited claims to authority.

But I strongly believe that social progress can be greatest when aristocracies of class give way to aristocracies of talent – or to use an even better term – to meritocracies. The well-led society of the future, in my view, will be a meritocracy – where leadership roles are based on personal and intellectual excellence.

Our goal, then, is not to provide special education for a privileged elite – but rather to open the doors of opportunity to students from a broader array of backgrounds. Our goal is to provide a truly exceptional education for truly exceptional students. And we hope that the Academies, by embracing this principle, can also become role models for many other schools.

Educating effective future leaders is a high responsibility. To do it well, we must look beyond the world which is passing from sight and turn our eyes to the uncharted world of the future. We must rise above the antiquated approaches of earlier days and instead infuse our students with what I would call three “A’s” of modern learning – the spirit of anticipation, the spirit of adaptation and the spirit of adventure. This will happen best in learning environments

which are both serious and focused on the one hand, but which are also joyous and inspiring places, operating on the cutting edge of pedagogy and knowledge.

To create such environments will be the central mission of the Aga Khan Academies in the years ahead. We are proud of the beginnings which have been made here in Mombasa in pursuing this vision, even as we are thankful to all of those who have contributed to this progress. And we look forward to continuing to work with you in pursuing the great educational adventures of the future.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the State Banquet Nairobi – 13 August 2007**

Your Excellency President Kibaki  
Honourable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

Let me say first what a wonderful honour it is – to become a Chief of the Order of the Golden Heart of Kenya, and to do so on one's Golden Jubilee!

I am most deeply grateful to President Kibaki for this award – and for his very warm and generous words.

It is a pleasure for me to be here tonight, among so many old and new friends.

As I observe this Jubilee year, I plan to use this occasion to do two things: first, to visit places and people that have been particularly important to the Ismaili community and to me throughout this last half century, and, secondly, to discuss issues which have been particularly important to us, with a special effort to put them into historical perspective, and to build for the future.

When I speak of places that have played a major role in my life, no place comes to mind more quickly than Kenya. My ties here go back to my “toto” days - how can I ever forget our childhood house on Caledonian Road, now named the Denis Pritt road and the mega rhubarb I grew up the rain-water drain, or driving down the garden steps in the late Sir Eboo's car? And how could I forget my brother's despair when his pet bantam chickens were eaten one night by a visiting leopard? Little did I suspect that the next night my rabbits would suffer the same fate.

But going beyond childhood memories, let me say that the work which has involved me here in more recent years includes many of the most far-reaching and satisfying endeavours of my lifetime.

It is good to be in Kenya for another reason—and that is the great spirit of this country. That spirit was evidenced again just three weeks ago, when a new global opinion survey was published by the Pew Institute and the New York Times. The results came as a surprise to many - particularly when they reported that the peoples of Africa - despite the severe problems, were quite optimistic about the future. Kenyans, in particular, felt not only that their own lives were improving, but that their children's lives would be better than their own.

The scholars who conducted the survey also described a sense of realism among Africans – an understanding that progress does not come as a steady wave, but rather as a series of surges and setbacks. Out of that realistic spirit has come a strong sense that the African story will have a happy ending.

Those who know Kenya know that there are good reasons for this hopeful spirit. Kenya has achieved impressive economic growth for the last three years, with the GDP expected to end at 6.9 % this year. During this same time, there has been a significant inflow of foreign investment, and a massive investment in education, health care and infrastructure. Kenya has one of the highest per capita literacy rates in Africa and is determined to make democracy work. It has created an enabling environment for vibrant enterprise in fields such as agriculture and horticulture, tourism and finance. In fact, at a recent World Economic Forum, Kenya was ranked among the top three countries in Africa in welcoming investment and innovation.

Kenya has played a role in past Jubilee celebrations of the Ismaili Imamat—during my late Grandfather's time and my own. Some of our projects here bear names which came from those celebrations—like Diamond Trust and Jubilee Insurance. Some of our proudest accomplishments were launched as Jubilee initiatives. In that same spirit, we are announcing

this week a number of new Golden Jubilee projects in Kenya and other parts of East Africa—including new ventures for the Aga Khan University Hospital and the Aga Khan University. The Aga Khan Academies programme will also expand into a new network of world class primary and secondary residential schools teaching the International Baccalaureate curriculum and covering no less than 14 countries in Africa and Asia. Its first school is already functioning in Mombasa, and is about to add new residence buildings for faculty and students.

These investments will build on past AKDN activities here – in the fields of business and finance, the media, health care, education, transport, infrastructure investment - and others. They reflect our respect and affection for the Kenyan people - and for the sense of promise which I recall from my childhood in Kenya, and which I continue to feel on every return visit.

I said a moment ago that I had two objectives as I mark this Jubilee year—the second one was to put into historical perspective some of my experiences over this half century.

As you know, my principal preoccupation has been with the developing world, watching as it has oscillated between hope and disappointment. The disappointments often resulted from the false hope that one theory or one dogma, one person or one party had all the answers to the riddles of development.

Genuine hope, on the other hand, has usually been rooted in a tough sense of realism – a recognition that no one has all the answers, that today's answers may not work forever, that good people do not all think alike, and that we must constantly learn from one another for an uncharted future.

When this realistic spirit prevails, then the search for economic and social progress can become a shared experience, based on what I would call a “cosmopolitan ethic” and fostering a spirit of partnership and collegiality.

These comments explain why I value so highly what people call “public/private” partnerships. There is much to be gained when governments cooperate with private institutions. Governments can help provide a strong enabling environment for both private enterprise and for civil society. For example, they could create common standards for civil society organizations whose work extends across national frontiers. The Aga Khan University, for instance, is planning extensive new investments in the region and common registration and accreditation policies would help facilitate this effort.

Inter-governmental cooperation in many areas can be a key which unlocks the future in East Africa. This is why both the Imamat and the AKDN support the creation of new federal constructs in the region—including the concept of an East African Community.

A federal concept simply means that governments will forge a united approach on matters which call for unity—and will operate in disparate ways when diverse approaches are better. To work of course, there must be a feeling of predictability as to who does what. And there must be a sense of equitable opportunity for all partners.

Federalism at its best need not be limited to governmental arrangements. Even as I commend the concept of a new East African Community on the political front, I would also encourage new region-wide approaches on the economic front, as well as in the civil society arena. Again, the dominant themes should be diversity, variety and experimentation - and an appropriate sharing of responsibilities.

History endorses the value of what I have called federal approaches - including the history of Islam - where some of the greatest chapters demonstrate how people who share a common faith can also embrace a broad diversity of local cultures.

The desire for unity and the urge to diversify may seem like contradictory forces - but the beauty and power of a partnership approach is that it respects the proper role of each impulse - and works out ways in which both can be respected.

If one of the themes of a Jubilee celebration is the search for historical perspective, then perhaps it will be appropriate for me to stretch that search back to the roots of the Islamic and Ismaili traditions, as I cite the words of the first hereditary Imam of the Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Hazrat Ali said: “No honour is like knowledge. No belief is like modesty and patience. No attainment is like humility. No power is like forbearance. And no support is more reliable than consultation.”

Those words seem particularly relevant today. The spirit that Hazrat Ali evokes - the spirit of modesty, humility, forbearance, and consultation – is an approach we might also call the spirit of partnership. It is this spirit which I hope will characterize these Jubilee celebrations—even as it guides leaders in the public, private and civil sectors as they confront the great challenges of our time.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration  
of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University,  
Nairobi – 13 August 2007**

Honourable Minister for Education Professor George Saitoti  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Chairman Dehlavi and the Members of the Aga Khan University Board of Trustees  
President Firoz Rasul  
Generous donors and well wishers of the University  
Distinguished guests

My thanks go out to all of you for sharing in this occasion with me. It is a special one for many reasons - including my close ties over so many years to this country, and to so many here whose friendship has enriched my life.

It was just one month ago that I celebrated my 50th year as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. We are marking that occasion with a series of visits to places where our community has been most deeply rooted. This visit to East Africa is the first of those tours - and that is most appropriate, given Nairobi's central role both in our community life and in so many activities of the Aga Khan Development Network - including, of course, the educational work of the Aga Khan University.

A golden jubilee is a valuable opportunity for putting the present into historical perspective. In that spirit, I would begin today by emphasizing how my concern for education grows intimately out of my family history. It was just a century ago that my late Grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, began to build a network of educational institutions which would eventually include some 300 schools, many of them in East Africa.

My late Grandfather, who was also the founding figure of Aligarh University in India, was renewing a tradition which stretches back over 1000 years, to our forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, who founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. And going back even further, I would cite the words of the first hereditary Imam of the Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib, who emphasized in his teachings that "No honour is like knowledge."

Those words have inspired an emphasis on education within our tradition ever since that time. That tradition has been expressed in recent decades in many ways, ranging from the sponsorship of Madrasa early childhood projects to the founding of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia. We are also establishing a new network of Aga Khan Academies - outstanding residential primary and secondary schools - teaching the International Baccalaureate and covering no less than 14 countries in Africa and Asia. The first of these is already functioning in Mombasa - I will visit there tomorrow to launch the building of its new residential campus.

The Aga Khan University (AKU) itself opened officially in 1983 in Pakistan where, I am happy to note, it has been voted as the country's leading university, and where it is now establishing a new under-graduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences. AKU is also planning a number of new post-graduate schools in Pakistan and Eastern Africa, to meet important needs in both areas. Amongst these Graduate Schools will most probably be "Architecture and Human Settlement", "Media and Communications", "Tourism and Leisure", "Management" and "Government, Public Policy and Civil Society".

AKU's expanding presence now includes teaching sites in eight countries, three of them in East Africa, working primarily in the fields of medicine, nursing and education - the East African sites now enroll fully one-third of all AKU students.

This brings me to a central point of these remarks, which is to announce another major step forward for the University. Building on the success of its existing programmes - the Aga Khan University is planning to establish a new Faculty of Health Sciences here in Nairobi. To my

knowledge, this will be the first private sector university in Eastern Africa to create a full-fledged Faculty of Health Sciences offering under-graduate and post-graduate degrees in Medicine, Nursing and the allied health sciences.

The central challenge of this new faculty will be to address the crucial health care priorities of the East African population - and indeed all of sub-Saharan Africa - from Sudan to Mozambique, from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic.

The new Faculty of Health Sciences will educate future generations of professional leaders in the evidence-based practice of medicine. Emphasizing both teaching and research, it will be accompanied by a major expansion of the Aga Khan University Hospital here, including a new Heart and Cancer Centre, which is scheduled to begin construction this year.

What we envision here in the coming years is an institution of some 1000 students and 175 faculty members, admitting students on a merit basis. Our new facilities, including a teaching hospital of 500 beds, will eventually occupy some 80,000 square meters. The total investment over the next fifteen years will be about 250 million dollars. When the project is complete, the Aga Khan University in Kenya alone will employ over 4000 people.

Let me add some further comments about the background to this massive engagement:

To begin with, it should be said in all candor that the recent history of higher education in numerous less developed countries has been discouraging. Many development policy makers in the 1960's and 1970's simply did not see higher education as a priority concern - instead they incorrectly calculated that they could not justify the cost of higher education from the foreseeable productivity of university graduates. As a result, some African countries which had strong institutions of higher education at the time of their independence, now find themselves unable to achieve even minimum global standards.

This sad situation demands urgent attention. In responding, we can try to learn from the successful examples of others. One reason for the success of American higher education, for example, is its highly diversified base - it looks to a mix of national, state, and local governments for support - as well as to the private sector. It thus serves a host of different constituencies, and provides a variety of essential specialities. I believe that the developing countries of Asia and Africa will likewise be well-served by encouraging private, self-governing institutions to develop side by side with those which are supported by the public sector.

The challenges of developing any new university are immense. They are massive consumers of human and material resources - even when they fall short of world-class standards. This means that the sponsors of new universities in the developing world will need to make significant long term commitments - and be capable of keeping them. They will also need access to the right human resources, as well as global perspectives on higher education, and a sense of complete dedication to the highest educational standards.

AKU is developing close partnerships with universities and centres of excellence around the world. It is also expanding geographically - throughout the East African region, for example. But for its work to be optimized here in Kenya - especially in the field of health sciences - processes such as accreditation and the recognition of medical credentials may need reviewing.

While Eastern Africa presently lacks a strong private university sector, this trend is changing. My hope is that the commitment we are announcing today will encourage other private initiatives, while also encouraging educators from the public sector to welcome private institutions as complementary players rather than as competitive ones.

The initiative we are describing today blends the realm of education with the realm of health care - so let me take a moment to say that our concern for health care also has deep and well-developed roots. The Ismaili Community in Kenya has been closely involved in health care in this country for many years, and numerous members of the community have become



doctors, dentists, pharmacologists and nurses. Meanwhile, the community and the Ismaili Imamat have fostered the development over fifty years of the Aga Khan Hospitals in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. These institutions, staffed by some of the most talented professionals from within the Ismaili community and from outside, have, I believe, served the surrounding populations with integrity and commitment. The Aga Khan Hospital here in Nairobi was the first multi-racial hospital in colonial Kenya, and it has recently set another new precedent by becoming the first private sector hospital in Kenya to educate in medicine and nursing, through its new affiliation with the Faculty of Health Sciences of AKU in Pakistan.

Earlier, I discussed the need for private and public cooperation in the field of education. The same approach is also needed in the field of medicine. I am aware of perceptions that private health care in Kenya is expensive - health care worldwide, in fact, is becoming more expensive every year. Sophisticated equipment is increasingly costly, and new technologies are replacing old ones at shorter and shorter intervals. More and more, the treatment of complex cases is calling for teams of specialized professionals rather than single generalists.

The Aga Khan Hospitals in Kenya, and everywhere else they exist - in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tanzania - operate on a non-profit basis - no dividends are ever distributed, but they also aim to operate on a break even, self-sustaining basis. In this way, if new external funding is available, it can provide for expanded facilities, new buildings and expensive new equipment, rather than compensating for operating losses. This is the only way that private institutions can provide ever-improving services, which will, in turn, have a beneficial impact on the quality of medical practice for the whole of society.

Even as we recognize the realities of private medical care, so we must recognize the importance of the public health care sector. In discussing this topic, I want to acknowledge the importance of the Kenyan Ministry of Health's assertive push towards a national health sector strategic plan. Such plans are essential not only for Kenya, but also for other developing countries. They should, no doubt, be drawn in wide consultation with all the stakeholders, including those from the private sector, who are the majority providers in Kenya.

In such plans, the question of human resources will be central. How will Kenya retain as many of its qualified practitioners as possible, reversing the trend toward a greater foreign migration of medical and nursing personnel? How can we attract back the Kenyan professionals who have left to practice elsewhere? The answers will be complex. But the creation of a world class health care faculty for the Aga Khan University, and the expansion of its teaching hospital, should make an important contribution to that goal, and thus to the achievement of global best practice standards throughout the region.

Thank You.

## **Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the "Spirit and Life" Exhibition, London, UK - 12 July 2007**

Your Royal Highnesses  
Your Excellencies  
Mr. Mayor  
My Lord  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply pleased all of you are here today, for the opening of our 'Spirit and Life' exhibition. And I know you share the special sense of honour I feel in welcoming the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, and so many other distinguished guests. Their Royal Highnesses have, in the past, visited the Azhar Park in Cairo and the restoration of the Altit Fort on the Silk Route in Northern Pakistan, both projects sponsored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. I am delighted by Their Royal Highnesses' support for the work being done by the Trust.

This exhibition is designed to give us a glimpse into the future. What we see here today is the nucleus of the Islamic art collections of the future Aga Khan Museum in Toronto. This museum, which is being designed by the renowned Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki, is conceived as a primarily educational institution in the field of Islamic art and culture, a specific mandate that is not fulfilled so far by other North American museums. We hope and trust it will contribute to a deeper understanding among cultures - to the strengthening of true cultural pluralism - which is increasingly essential to peace, and to progress, in our world.

This is an appropriate place for us to share in this vision - and to talk about that objective. Britain, through its centuries of history, has been one of the world's countries that has been most exposed to the cultures of other societies. London, in particular, is a crossroads for widely diverse peoples - from every corner of the planet.

We can see the evidence of that in the impressive range of artworks found in places such as the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert Museum just across the road - where Your Royal Highness recently inaugurated the impressive new Islamic Art Gallery. We see our comparatively modest exhibition here at the Ismaili Centre as a complement to that and other venues in this country which house Islamic Art, and which spotlight both its richness and its diversity.

I am also very pleased that you are today in a building of which we are very proud, our Ismaili Centre. We hope that this exhibition will help bring many more Londoners into this place, the centre of spiritual life for our community in Britain.

Certainly one of the lessons we have learned in recent years is that the world of Islam and the Western world need to work together much more effectively at building mutual understanding - especially as these cultures interact and intermingle more actively. We hope that this exhibition - and the museum which it anticipates - will contribute to a better Western understanding of the peoples of Islam: in all of their religious, ethnic, linguistic and social diversity.

As you know, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, in particular, and the Aga Khan Development Network, in general, are working toward this goal in a wide variety of ways. I am especially pleased to take this occasion to thank an important partner in our efforts, the Prince of Wales - along with 18 organisations which make up the Prince's Charities, for their special cooperation and support. Our collaboration ranges from the world of corporate social responsibility to the challenges of economic development, from public health projects to creative educational initiatives, from environmental and architectural concerns to artistic and cultural workshops. We hope and we trust that the beginnings we have realized in our work together, can continue to flourish - and to multiply.

If I could express one hope for all of you, as you leave this place today, it is that you will appreciate even more deeply how much culture matters in Muslim societies, and how deeply culture is entwined for Muslims with matters of faith. This is why we call this exhibition: 'Spirit

and Life'. At a time when the forces of exclusion, alienation, and separation can often seem so threatening in our world, I am convinced that our ability to honor authentic symbols of pride and identity - and to share their beauty and their power with one another - can be a tremendous force for good. I hope you will feel the same way - let me thank you, most sincerely, once again, for sharing with us in this important moment.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at  
Graduation Ceremony of the Masters of Public Affairs (MPA) Programme at the  
Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po) - 15 June, 2007**

Mr. Richard Descoings, Director of Sciences Po  
Directors and Faculty of the MPA Programme  
Graduating Students and their Families  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour to be with you today.

This is a memorable time for all of you who are graduating today - and for your friends and families. And it is also a special moment in the life of this School - the graduation of the first class to earn the new Master of Public Affairs degree.

The values which Sciences Po honors today are deeply rooted in its history - stretching back now over a century and a third a lot of people have been ahead of you. But the School's hallmark is that it has always honored the past by embracing the future. The Master of Public Affairs programme - especially its emphasis on international partnerships - is an ideal example of new innovation in the service of old ideals.

Among those ideals has been the principle of educating for leadership, but leadership based not on social standing or material resources but on intellectual merit.

The founders of Sciences Po realized in their time that aristocracies of class must give way to aristocracies of talent - that is, to meritocracies. And the path to meritocracy in leadership is meritocracy in education.

Another value which Sciences Po has emphasized from the start is that of pluralism - an outlook which rises above parochial preoccupations. That outlook is reflected today in your strong international commitments, including your new Master of Public Affairs degree.

I was impressed with this programme from the day I first learned that Sciences Po would join with Columbia University and the London School of Economics in its sponsorship. And my enthusiasm is reinforced as I look out at the global mix of your first graduating class. I wish I had the time to meet and talk to every one of you.

I had the opportunity to speak just a year and a month ago at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. I shared with that audience a definition I once heard of a good graduation speaker - they say it is someone who can talk in someone else's sleep.

I hope that we can break that pattern today.

Toward that end, I thought it might be helpful if I took up a question which may well be on many of your minds: Just who is the Aga Khan, anyway? And why is he here?

In response, let me say first that I was born into a Muslim family, linked by heredity to Prophet Muhammad (May peace be upon him and his family). It was exactly fifty years ago that I became the 49th Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

The ethics of Islam bridge the realms of faith on the one hand and practical life on the other - what we call Din and Dunya. Accordingly, my spiritual responsibilities for interpreting the faith are accompanied by a strong engagement in issues relating to the quality of life and well being. This latter commitment extends not only to the Ismaili community but also to those with whom they share their lives - locally, nationally and internationally.

One of the issues which has concerned me the most over these years has been the topic of education.

My forefathers, as far back as a thousand years ago and as recently as a century ago, founded some of the great universities of the Muslim world, and I have continued in that tradition through a program of Aga Khan Academies, a school system, and by establishing the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

Against this background, you can understand why the success of your new program is of such a great interest for me.

We hear a great deal these days about a clash of civilizations between the Islamic world and the West. I disagree profoundly. In my view, it is a clash of ignorance which we are facing. And the answer to ignorance is education.

I should note that my own education has blended Islamic and western traditions. My secondary and university schooling, in fact, was in Europe and in America. But my perspective over these last fifty years has also been profoundly shaped by the developing world.

The Ismailis currently reside – as minorities - in more than 25 countries, mostly in the developing world. For five decades, that has been my world – my virtually permanent preoccupation. During that time we have built a wide-ranging series of programmes involving these societies - in fields such as health care, education and culture, economic infrastructure and social development, the environment, the arts, and the media – coordinated through the Aga Khan Development Network.

Over this past half century, the pace of change on our planet has been bewildering. And that pace is accelerating. I was struck last month by the fact that the leadership of France, the U.K. and Germany had changed significantly in just a few months and similar changes are coming in the United States.

As the pace of history accelerates, developments that occurred over fifty years in my lifetime will happen in fifteen or even five years for your generation. This is why I believe that the most important thing you could have mastered in the course of your studies - as you were becoming “Masters” of Public Affairs - was not any specific body of knowledge, but rather the ability to go on learning.

There is nothing we can do to slow the pace of change, but we can hope to help steer its direction.

As we do so, there are three challenges in particular that I would like to highlight to you today. They are: first, the future of democracy, especially in the developing world; secondly, the central role which civil society can play in that development; and thirdly, the crisis in relations between the West and the Islamic world. These are all areas which are going to affect the world in which you live in the decades ahead.

The history of democracy, especially in areas of Asia and Africa which I know well, has been a long series of jolts and jars. Today, any thoughtful observer of those regions would have to conclude that democracy has been losing popular confidence as an effective form of government.

In many of these countries, governments, constitutions, parliaments, and political parties are little more than a dysfunctional assemblage of notional democratic vehicles. Elections are held, constitutions are validated, and international monitors issue their reports, but observing these forms of government is not the same thing as governing effectively.

A recent survey by UNDP of 18 South American countries confirmed that the majority of people were less interested in their forms of government than in their quality of life. In simple terms, most people would rather have a beneficent paternalistic dictator, provided he improved the quality of life, than a less effective, though duly elected, democratic leadership.

The question that must be asked, I believe, is not whether democracy is a good thing in the abstract, but rather how to help democracy perform better in practice. Do we really know what is going wrong? And why? Do we know what corrective steps should be taken? And by whom?

These are massive questions, and I do not claim to know the answers. But I do believe that significantly more thought must be given to these issues, by the intelligentsia of our world, yourselves included.

As we think about these questions, there are some hopeful signs. Generally speaking, the most successful developing countries are those which have engaged actively with the global knowledge society, those which have accepted and defended the value of pluralism, and those which have created an enabling environment for human enterprise, rather than indulging in asphyxiating policies which discourage human endeavour.

But in too many places, democratic practice is deeply flawed. One problem is simple ignorance of the various forms of democracy. I attribute this in part to the absence of good education in comparative government. Holding a national referendum on a new constitution, is no guarantee that the provisions of the constitution have been understood, let alone validated, by popular consent.

In addition, the machinery of government - including the creation and funding of political parties, is often unguided and undisciplined, and widely open to manipulation and fraud. Nor is government performance monitored effectively - by internal processes or by the media.

Finally, the very concept of democracy must be adapted to a variety of national and cultural contexts. Effective democracy can not be imposed from the top or from the outside. Democracy's value must be deeply felt in the daily lives of a country's population, including the rural majority, if it is to be upheld and promoted.

Against this background, it would be wise, in my view, to prepare ourselves for a time of testing as far as democracy is concerned. We can expect a mix of successes, failures and disappointments, as well as a continuing array of governing arrangements: absolute monarchies, constitutional monarchies, single house or dual house parliaments, presidential and other systems, including numerous forms of federalism. In addition, regional groupings will increasingly play important roles.

Does this picture mean continuing instability in parts of the developing world? May be.

But I have confidence that if we can ask the right questions about democracy, we will increasingly find the right answers.

In this regard, the fact that history moves at an accelerating pace is both a challenge and an opportunity. I remember how people 50 years ago carelessly referred to many of the developing economies as hopeless "basket cases", including places that have taken off since - like India and China.

As history demonstrates, so-called backward places can move forward over time. It is not unrealistic to plan for progress.

This brings me to my second major point. One of the reasons that I am more optimistic than some about the future of the developing world is my faith that a host of new institutions can play a larger role in that future. I am especially enthusiastic about the potential of what I call "civil society".

By civil society, I mean a set of institutions which are neither governmental nor commercial, organizations which are powered by private energies but designed to advance the public good. They work in fields such as education, health, science and research. They embrace professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts associations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment. Many are targeted to fight poverty and social inequity.

Too often we have assumed that voluntary organizations are too limited to serve great public purposes. For some, the very notion of private organizations devoted to public goals seems to be an oxymoron.

But this skeptical attitude is changing. The power of civil society is becoming more apparent - in your coursework here at Sciences Po among other places. This is all to the good - civil society should have a prominent place in the new equation for social progress, complementing rather than competing with government. And the same thing is true of the private business sector - and the potential for public-private partnerships.

Civil and private institutions have unique capacities for spurring social progress - even when governments falter. For one thing, because they are intimately connected to the warp and woof of daily life, they can predict new patterns with particular sensitivity.

The development of civil society can also help meet the challenge of cultural diversity, giving diverse constituencies effective ways to express and preserve their distinct identities.

Private institutions also provide good laboratories for experimentation. Because they are multiple in nature, they can try a variety of approaches, sometimes failing and sometimes succeeding, but always learning from their experiences. And because these institutions need NOT make short term accommodations to conventional wisdom or current fashions, they have greater freedom to be controversial - and creative.

Let me move then to my third topic, the crisis in relations between the West and the Islamic world. I cannot remember a time when these relations have been so strained, or so wide-sweeping in their impact - both across generations and across the world.

I am deeply convinced that the fundamental roots of this crisis are infinitely more political than they are theological. And we can deal effectively with this crisis, I believe, only if we begin by addressing a complex set of political issues, rather than worrying so much about a conflict of religions.

If you reflect back to the origins of the present flash points, the historical legacy has been consistently political - and frequently explosive. The present Middle East situation was born at the end of World War I, growing out of the search for a homeland for the Jewish peoples of our world. The Kashmir conflict was born out of the decolonisation process when Britain withdrew from the then-united India. More recently, the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the British and American invasion of Iraq have further contributed to the turmoil.

But disputes among the three Abrahamic faiths themselves have not been responsible for these conflicts. Yes, many of the problems have since taken on the colouring of interfaith conflict, but that development is the consequence, much more than the cause, of these tragedies.

Political conflict, of course, has sometimes intensified theological forces which were once less conflictual, particularly in the Islamic world. Separations within Islam have become more visible, more irascible, and more difficult to address. Some such divisions, such as relations between Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims, or between various interpretations of Islam, have historical roots which are centuries old, and have been revived and fanned by political developments. But other cleavages, between the secular states and the theocracies of the Muslim world, for example, or between the ultra rich and the ultra poor, are essentially the products of modern times - at least in their scope and scale.

Three observations are critical here. First, there really is no one single Islamic world, but a variety of individual situations which need individual analysis. Second, the faith of Islam, in the vast majority of its interpretations, is not in conflict with the other great Abrahamic traditions. Third, each crisis we encounter stems from its own specific political context. Bringing a new sense of peace and order to this complex situation will require great subtlety, patience, understanding and knowledge. Sadly, none, I repeat none, of these requirements

are sufficiently available amongst the main players today. There is clumsiness, not subtlety, there is impatience, not patience, there is a massive deficit in understanding and an enormous knowledge vacuum.

Too often, there is also a tendency to run away from unpleasant truths. But we will not ameliorate these conflicts unless we address the underlying conditions - especially when economic despair leads to radicalization. It has taken 50 years, and the publication of the Sachar Committee Report, to acknowledge that the Muslims of India are second class citizens. But is the same thing not also true of the Muslims of Mindanao? It is perhaps understandable that any religious grouping which has been marginalized economically will see itself as being victimised. But our priority should not be to sharpen religious distinctions but to address human suffering.

Let me also comment on the sharpening of cultural conflict within western societies.

The past few years have been a dispiriting time in Europe - in part because of what many describe as a clash of civilizations in Europe's midst, triggered by the rapid growth of minority populations. Perhaps, under a revitalized leadership, Europe can lead the world in meeting that challenge. But it will not be easy.

Cultural conflict in the past was often mitigated by the fact that sharp cultural distinctions were muffled by geographic distance.

But geography as a cushion between cultures has been diminishing in recent years. The communications revolution has meant "the death of distance". More than that, cultures are now mixing physically to an extent that would once have seemed impossible.

Economic globalization contributes to the trend. Some 45 million young people enter the job market in the developing world each year - but there are not enough jobs at home for many of them. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 member countries of the OECD. Some 150 million legal immigrants now live outside their native countries, joined by uncounted millions of illegal immigrants. Remittances sent home by immigrants total some \$145 billion a year - and generate twice that amount in economic activity.

The economic forces that propel immigration are far more powerful and relentless, I believe, than most people understand. They will not readily or easily be reversed or impeded.

As once homogenous societies become distinctly multi-cultural, the rhythms, colours and flavours of host communities change, inspiring some, but frightening others. More than half of the respondents in recent European opinion polls have expressed a negative view of immigration.

The frequent result of all these factors has been marginalization - socially and economically - for many minorities. And we need not look very far to see the evidence. To be sure, the victims of marginalization in our world can be found on the floodplains of Bangladesh, the village streets of Uganda, and the teeming neighbourhoods of Cairo. But they can also be found in the banlieu of Paris.

The "Clash of Civilizations" is both a local and a global problem.

The world is becoming more pluralist in fact - but not in spirit. "Cosmopolitan" social patterns have not yet been matched by what I would call "a cosmopolitan ethic".

One of the great stumbling blocks to the advance of pluralism, in my view, is simple human arrogance. All of the world's great religions warn against self righteousness - yet too many are still tempted to play God themselves - rather than recognising their humility before the Divine.

A central element in a truly religious outlook, it seems to me, is a recognition that we all have a great deal to learn from one another.



The Holy Quran speaks of how mankind has been created by a single Creator “from a single soul...” – a profound affirmation of the unity of humanity.

This Islamic ideal, of course, is shared by other great religions. Despite the long history of religious conflict, there is also a long counter-history of religious tolerance.

Instead of shouting at one another, our faiths ask us to listen - and learn from one another. As we do, one of our first lessons might well center on those powerful but often neglected chapters in history when Islamic and European cultures interacted cooperatively and creatively to realize some of civilization's peak achievements.

The spirit of pluralism is not a pallid religious compromise. It is a sacred religious imperative. In this light, our differences can become sources of enrichment, so that we see “the other” as an opportunity and a blessing - whether “the other” lives across the street - or across the world.

Having looked then at the challenges of democracy, the opportunities for civil society, and the nature of our cultural divides, let me return to a point I made earlier - the acceleration of history, the danger of further drift, and the need to master change.

Who is it, I would ask in closing, who is best positioned to pursue such mastery? Among those who inherit this obligation and this opportunity, I would suggest, are you who are graduating this week from one of the world's most advanced university programmes, with a title which tells us that you are, each one of you, a “Master of Public Affairs”.

As you graduate, you have my warmest congratulations on all you have accomplished so far, and my prayer that God may be with you, inspiring you and empowering you, in all the good things you will be doing in the days ahead.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at  
The Enabling Environment Conference  
in Kabul, Afghanistan - June 4, 2007**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
Your Excellency President Hamid Karzai  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure and honour to be with you all today. We extend our warmest thanks to all those whose dedication has made this conference possible, most especially to President Karzai and the Government of Afghanistan for their central role - as well as to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who will attend tomorrow's closing session.

Let me also express our deepest gratitude to Prime Minister Badawi for his deep engagement with the subject of this conference - and for the example Malaysia has provided of a successful, pluralistic, Muslim country, guided by the ethics of Islam. This achievement is something of which the whole Muslim world can be particularly proud.

We are approaching the 50th anniversary of Malaysian independence in September - so it is a particularly appropriate moment to salute Malaysia's record as a role model for the Ummah and for the entire developing world.

I am particularly aware these days of the significance of 50th anniversaries, as I will complete, in July, my 50th year as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

It is appropriate to both of these anniversaries that we should be talking today about an Enabling Environment for Development - for this has been a central theme in the story of Malaysia since its independence - and it has also been a central theme of my Imamate. In fact, it was on another personal Jubilee occasion - just 25 years ago - that I addressed this topic at the first Enabling Environment Conference in Nairobi.

Over the ensuing quarter century, we have learned a great deal about the nature of Enabling Environments. Among other things, we have been learning to free ourselves from overly simple myths about how development works.

The term "Enabling Environment" has two implications which I would underscore today. First, it reminds us that the conditions which enable progress can be extremely complex, that an entire "environment" of interacting forces must come together if development is truly to take root - and to take off.

Second - the term recognizes that even the right environment is still only an enabling condition - not a sufficient one. Our conference title does not talk about an environment which "solves" or "cures" or "progresses" or "prevails" - but rather about an environment which "enables". In the end, human progress must grow out of the human heart and soul. The environment enables - but it is the human spirit, guided and supported by the Divine Will, which eventually triumphs.

What a sound enabling environment must do is to create a favourable framework in which human creativity can flourish.

When I have spoken about this topic in the past, I have emphasized such conditions as political stability, safety and security, citizen rights, predictable democratic practices, and a legal and administrative framework which is streamlined and efficient, impartial and effective. While these concerns are largely the responsibilities of government I believe that the ethics of Islam can contribute significantly to their achievement, especially the importance Islam places on mediation and conciliation.

Laying the State's political foundation is a necessary first step for an enabling environment, but even effective government can take us only so far. And that is why we have been talking more in recent years about two other sectors: first, what I often call the role of "civil society"; and, secondly, the capacities of the private sector.

By civil society, I mean a realm of activity which is neither governmental nor commercial, institutions designed to advance the public good, but powered by private energies. They include non-commercial, non-governmental entities in fields such as education, health, science and research. They embrace professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts associations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment.

Of course, the civil sector includes international non-governmental organizations - which are so well represented at this gathering. But they also grow, increasingly, out of local communities and indigenous populations. This is particularly true for Afghanistan, where a broad sense of local commitment, tied to rural villages and urban neighbourhoods, will be an indispensable development force.

Throughout the developing world, we see a new emphasis on the capacities of indigenous organizations to meet development challenges - on a bottom up rather than a top down approach. Voluntary village associations, for example, are undertaking projects which once lay in the political domain - ranging from the installation of water and sanitation systems and the building of irrigation canals, to the provision of educational services and the support of health and safety standards.

In saying all of this, I do not mean to ignore the importance of government. The role of civil society is to complement government efforts, not compete with them. And the same thing is true of a third important partner in a great alliance for development - the private, business sector.

All around the world, private companies of all sizes are a rapidly growing source of progressive energy. Increasingly, they see corporate social responsibility not as something extra - a symbolic after-thought tacked on to the corporate agenda at the end of the day - but rather as part and parcel of their basic commercial strategies. Many companies have set up dedicated departments or corporate foundations to lead such efforts - budgeting a portion of their proceeds to finance them. Other companies encourage and even match the contributions of time and treasure made by individual employees.

We can see a notable example of this potential here in Kabul. Roshan is a mobile phone company, only four years old, but already the largest company in Afghanistan - with over one million customers and nearly a thousand employees. For almost two years now, it has sponsored a department of Corporate Social Responsibility - the first of its kind in Afghanistan.

Roshan sponsors micro-finance projects which enable women to become independent entrepreneurs - selling phone services, or repairing mobile phones. It provides playgrounds, meals, cultural and school projects for street children. It has pioneered in the field of Telemedicine - using fibre optic and microwave links to connect local patients to sophisticated doctors and equipment in Karachi.

Roshan has recently been honoured, for these and other efforts, by the prestigious Committee to Encourage Corporate Philanthropy - an association of over 160 major corporations - as an inspirational business model.

The Roshan story is one I know well - since the company's largest shareholder is the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development. But it is only one of countless examples of imaginative business initiatives.

Let me add one further thought - perhaps the most important. To be sure, each of these three sectors - government, civil society, and the business sector - can accomplish important things on its own. But it is my conviction - that one of the chief obstacles to development in our time

is that the energies of all three sectors are too often scattered and fragmented. Too often, the various actors go about their business without enough reference to one another. The result often reminds me of an orchestra made up of talented and dedicated artists - but playing from different scores. The result is not harmony but cacophony - and an unevenness of public impact which is inherently unfair.

Let me be clear: I am not denying the importance of decentralized, pluralistic approaches to development. . But I also believe that the positive impact of all the participants could be compounded if they understood one another even better, talked to one another even more often, and partnered together even more effectively.

Some of you may recall how the World Bank has tried to foster a series of stakeholder fora to encourage better coordination of developmental efforts. I believe that such an effort could have particular value for Afghanistan - where fragmentation and decentralization has been so deeply embedded in the physical geography of the country -and thus in its culture, as well.

Extreme forms of fragmentation have been a barrier to progress in Afghanistan. The most profound example is the fact that much of this country's economic life – activities related to illicit drug production - falls outside the reach of any legitimate regime. In many developing countries, illicit activities have shrunk as legal authority extends its influence and as alternative licit activities - in the realm of agriculture for example - take on added value. But these processes are still at an early stage in Afghanistan.

Yet even within the sphere of legality and legitimacy, the problem of fragmentation and disconnection is an important challenge. Too often the good things that happen here occur in relative isolation from one another – too often the good people who contribute here lack the sense of mutual support and shared insight which could magnify their impact. The spirit of vigorous individual initiative is deeply-rooted in the Afghan spirit - but it could be tapped more effectively within a stronger framework of cooperation and consultation.

We should not forget, however, that the political history of Afghanistan is also one in which the traditional consultative assembly –the Loya Jirga - has played an important role. Its objectives have been those of engagement, accommodation and cooperation - and it is in that same spirit that a regular stakeholder development forum in Afghanistan might usefully be convened.

Perhaps our meeting today can add useful momentum to such a process, not only by creating a roadmap for future progress but also by ensuring that this roadmap will be seriously consulted and appropriately adjusted as time goes on.

Many good things might grow out of such enhanced communication. Among them, I would hope, would be an unfolding array of public-private partnerships. The range of such partnerships has been expanding of late - but there is still enormous unrealized potential.

Such partnerships will require a profound spirit of reciprocal obligation and mutual accountability - a readiness to share the work, share the costs, share the risks, and share the credit.

A good example of a successful three way partnership is a recent project to build health-care centres in Afghanistan. Local communities donated the land, the government financed the construction, and the Aga Khan Development Network trained the staff.

Another quite different example in which I have been involved was the creation of Al-Azhar Park and revitalising the Darb al-Ahmar neighbourhood in Cairo. At least ten different civil, governmental and private groups came together in that effort from at least five different countries.

Such partnerships can have another benefit as well - the partners can learn a lot from one another. A village association, for example, may need help with basic accounting practices. Another group might be creative with local projects, but inexperienced in extending their

scale. Various other organizations may be good at long-range planning, or public communication, or legal strategies. Alliances of such entities should continually be comparing notes and sharing best practices.

Nor should such alliances be limited by outmoded geographic constraints. Here, as elsewhere, the future will depend on our ability to rise above the accident of common geography and to rally around common interests - whether our skills lie in apricot processing or tourism, transport or literature or law.

Each step we take to expand our horizons will make the next step easier. In Northern Afghanistan, for example, our network has built several bridges across the Pyanj River to Tajikistan, and it has been gratifying to see how markets have grown up around each of them. And once such interaction is launched, the integration process can accelerate. The regionalization impulse can be a critical part of an effective enabling environment.

Let me close these remarks by asking what may seem to be an impertinent question. How do we know whether these programs are actually working or not? How do we know whether they are improving? It would be very easy to mislead ourselves on this score -and to assume that because we are trying hard, or spending significant sums of money, or are inspired by noble intentions, or are holding a lot of meetings - we must therefore be making an effective impact.

But this is not always the case. And that is why it is so important that all of us should be held accountable for the results we produce - that our work should be measured by its observable, positive impact on the quality of people's lives.

But how should this measurement be done?

Let me mention in this regard a successful programme we have started in a neighbouring country: the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP).

One of PCP's roles is to function as a standard-setting body - a group that certifies the effectiveness of organizations in contributing to the public good. This certification becomes a "seal of good housekeeping" for such institutions. The score-keeping is done by independent judges in the areas of internal governance, financial management and programme delivery. The goal is to set sector-wide standards and to encourage the widespread adoption of 'best practices'.

The PCP uses its website and databases to tell these success stories in ways which will inspire further successes. You can imagine how such an important effort can help potential allies in their search for credible partners. Even those organisations that fail to meet the standards can benefit, as PCP steps in to link them with specialised capacity-building groups.

The story of the PCP is another sign of a recent maturing process in the development arena. It represents another component of a strong enabling environment.

In sum, meeting the development challenge will continue to be a complex matter - one which will not only demand the very best of government, civil society and private enterprise, but will also require new efforts to coordinate and harmonize their various energies. And it will require discipline in the way we measure and evaluate the outcomes. .

But I would end, as I began, by suggesting that an enabling environment can only do so much. In the final analysis, it can create a framework in which individuals can make the best possible use of their own personal gifts.

An Ayat in the Holy Quran says: "Verily, God does not change a people's condition unless they change that which is in themselves." In the end, it is the will and the resourcefulness of the individual human being that, with Allah's blessings and guidance, will determine our future.

It is to that end that this conference has been organized - and it is to that end that each of us must continually be rededicated.

Thank you

**Inauguration speech at "Splendori a Corte", an exhibition of rare art and manuscripts from the Aga Khan Museum collection, being shown until June 3rd, 2007 at the Palazzo della Pilotta in Parma - March 30, 2007**

Let me begin by thanking Mrs. Fornari, Mayor Ubaldi and Senator Lunardi for their kind words of welcome to representatives of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, our guests and me here at Parma.

As Presidente Onorario Fondazione Parma Capitale della Musica, and Chairman of the Board of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture it is an honour for me to be here tonight at this, the first preview of masterpieces of Islamic Art in the Collections of the Aga Khan Museum entitled Splendori a Corte and the performance of Sacred and Festive Music Traditions from Central Asia.

The past has privileged me with the friendship of Senator Lunardi and Ing. Baiocchi, as well as the happy occasion to have visited Parma in a private capacity and to have been welcomed by Mayor Ubaldi. During these happy times, we shared many thoughts on how our areas of mutual interest could build into joint initiatives from which, amongst other goals, the city of Parma could benefit. History and Culture were common areas of engagement, and it was a particularly exciting moment for me, when I realised we could bring them together in a shared platform of activities. That would, of course, not have been possible, unless those responsible for sustaining and enhancing the cultural life of this city had been willing to look outside the limits of the city, outside the frontiers of Italy and Europe, and espouse the concept that culture from whatever part of the world and from whatever background, should be part of the new region of Parma as the Capitale della Musica. In our world, where major cultures and faiths are ignorant of each other, new dialogues are critical. And Parma has opened the door to this important and challenging prospect. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture and I are honoured that the first initiative of the young Foundation Parma Capitale della Musica to embrace the global world around us, has been to welcome the cultural representations of various parts of the Muslim world.

The developing political crises of the last few years, and the large numbers of Muslims emigrating to the West, have revealed – often dramatically – the considerable lack of knowledge of the Muslim world in many Western societies. This ignorance spans all aspects of the peoples of Islam: their pluralism, the diversity of their interpretations of the Qur'anic faith, the chronological and geographical extent of their history and culture, as well as their ethnic, linguistic and social diversity.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the cultural agency of the Aga Khan Development Network, works to expand this knowledge. It promotes debate about the built environment; proposes exemplars and solutions for contemporary design problems; engages in the physical and social revitalisation of communities, thus impacting their quality of life; and, through education and cultural initiatives in the realm of music and the arts, aims to position properly the greatness of the cultures of the Muslim world in our global cultural heritage.

These societies are experiencing dramatic periods of transition, processes of change, and homogenising forces of popular culture, often from far away lands which they view as threatening the significant contributions Muslim civilisations have made to the common heritage of humanity and radically altering the value systems of their future generations. In Muslim societies culture matters a great deal, for it is intimately intertwined with matters of faith. Authentic symbols of pride and identity seem to be disappearing leading to a sense of exclusion, alienation or even challenge to inherited identity.

The need for better understanding across cultures has never been greater - nor more pressing. We must do our utmost to value and protect what is greatest in our common heritage. It is important that the diversity of cultures, the pluralism that characterises many societies today, is recognised as a vital asset and prerequisite for progress and development.

I warmly thank the Foundation Parma Capitale della Musica for giving the Aga Khan Trust for Culture the opportunity to share with you, in this great city and this great country of unique

cultural wealth, a small sample of the cultural assets of the Islamic world, and to try to build new forces of pride and respect for the cultural manifestations of the Islamic world at a global level, and thereby contributing to the reduction of the damage that has been made in recent times by questionable decisions in the field of international politics.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the Official Opening of the Kampala Serena Hotel,  
10 November 2006**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
Your Excellency President Museveni of the Republic of Uganda  
The Right Honourable Prime Minister  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Distinguished Guests

What an immense privilege it is to be present at this great beginning - the inauguration of what has instantly become one of Africa's finest hotels, the Kampala Serena. And what a joy it is to share in this moment with all of you - the people who made it possible.

Among us today are those who dreamed the dream of developing Ugandan tourism many years ago. Here also are those from the halls of government, from private business and from the institutions of civil society who developed the financial and legal arrangements which under-gird this project. Also present are many of the architects and artists, designers and engineers, construction workers and managers, hotel staff, volunteers, and so many others whose work has turned our hopes into tangible reality.

We are deeply indebted to you all.

Today's ceremony marks the culmination of a long process. My own interest in Ugandan tourism goes back at least to 1968, when we first acquired development sites on what was called the old safari circuit. It was thirteen years ago that we identified the Nile Hotel as a potential development site. And it was three years ago that our tender offer for the Nile Hotel was accepted.

I remember how pleased we were at that time with the powerful example set by the Ugandan Government's Privatization Unit when it insisted on a transparent and professional tender process. Today, we again express our appreciation to the President and the Government of Uganda for providing the enabling environment which has allowed this project to flourish.

Once our agreement was reached, the next step was to achieve what our bid document promised. Under the direction of our Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development, and its Tourism Promotion Services group, that work was accomplished in record time - in 17 whirlwind months. During this period, we spent approximately one and a half million US dollars per month - rehabilitating, extending and transforming the old Nile Hotel. Another three months has now been spent in streamlining its operations. The result is a hotel complex which is, both in form and function, one of the outstanding tourism facilities in all of Africa - indeed, in all of the developing world.

So that is something of the historical context of the Kampala Serena project. But let me also say a word about its organizational context. For this new hotel is only one of 17 Serena properties which now brighten the African landscape - in Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Mozambique, and now Uganda.

This hospitality group began in the early 1970's with just four units. We hope and plan that its growth will continue, in Uganda and in other places, including Rwanda. Our intention is that the model we have adopted elsewhere in the region will also be applied here in this country - so that this major new hotel in the capital city can be followed, as soon as the necessary allocations are granted, by a quality circuit of new resorts and safari lodges in the Ugandan countryside. When that happens, a new East African travel circuit will be completed - featuring world class, state-of-the-art facilities, comprising a unique array of inspiring attractions, and offering a holiday experience "second-to-none".



This growing African enterprise, in turn, is part of a larger Serena presence, comprising 25 facilities in eight countries in the developing world. The newest of these opened in Kabul, Afghanistan, exactly one year ago this week. And just two weeks ago, we dedicated the foundation for a new Serena Hotel in Dushanbe, in Tajikistan. Let me continue, then, with a word about Serena's strategic and philosophical background.

In all of these places, the Serena projects exemplify a larger strategy. In all of these places, our goal is not merely to build an attractive building or to fill its rooms with visitors, but also to make a strategic investment which many private investors might be reluctant to make, but which promises to produce a magnificent multiplier effect as its impact ripples through the local communities.

The multiplier effect is in part an economic one. It is measured in jobs - created in building, maintaining and operating the new facility. The impact is measured by the flow of visitors and their resources - and by the investments they are encouraged to make. It is measured by the returns it generates for local investors, as our projects achieve stability and their shares are placed on local stock exchanges. It is also measured in the motivating effect a successful new enterprise almost inevitably has on other local enterprises.

But these ripple effects need not be limited to the economic sector. Their impact can also be a social and a cultural one, as this project works to re-enforce the values of hospitality and courtesy, of excellence and efficiency, of community and confidence, of self reliance and self improvement. We are proud that our projects exemplify the highest standards of corporate governance and human resource development. We also believe that, through the creative design of the hotel and through the activities it supports, this effort will help to nourish cultural pride, strengthen artistic expression, and renew traditional values.

But even as it embraces rich traditions of the past, this project also looks to an exciting future. For the hospitality industry, one of the oldest in the world, is the symbol of a bold new world, in which global connection, global travel, and global coordination will be a way of life in virtually every community. The Kampala Serena Hotel, like many of its sister projects, will be a place where the local and the global regularly intersect - enriching the lives of all who participate in this process.

Let me conclude with a word about the development process in Africa - as I have seen it emerge now over nearly fifty years as Imam of the Ismaili Muslim community. I came to this position in 1957, a moment when the colonial era was about to end in Africa, and I have been a close observer and an active participant in the region ever since.

For two generations now, those who care about African development have been seeking an important key, searching for the best way to improve the quality of human life by advancing the pace of economic development. One of the most promising outcomes of that search was the creation of a new set of venture capital institutions - ready to invest in projects which traditional private investors were less likely to support.

It is worth recalling, candidly, the several good reasons why private investors were often reluctant supporters of African initiatives: political instability, currency fluctuations, a lack of qualified manpower, low rates of return - all of these factors contributed to the problem. But the biggest risk was often the fear that the projects would be too closely controlled by inexperienced governments - and perhaps even nationalized at some point along the way. Given all of these uncertainties, much of the investment which did occur came from sources which put more emphasis on human development goals - and less emphasis on economic profit. Among them, for many years now, has been the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development - or AKFED as it has come to be known.

These uncertainties have eased to some extent in more recent times, and in some cases the investment climate has improved. But at the same time, the requirements of the international investment community have also become more rigorous. Some of these agencies have given up their development agenda and act as fully commercial financial institutions - others are now increasingly concerned with new development conditionalities - including human rights,

environmental protection, and the practices of good governance, as well as rates of financial return.

Countries like Uganda will have to take all these trends into account as they plan their economic futures. And so will institutions such as AKFED. We must be certain, for example, that our growing range of co-investors can meet their financial goals. But at the same time, we are determined to keep clearly in view our traditional commitment to developmental rather than purely financial goals. We believe this makes AKFED a particularly attractive and effective partner in projects which will work to improve the quality of life for the peoples of the developing world.

This is true because AKFED is ready to take justified investment risks - to a greater extent than many other investors. We are ready to be patient investors, with a far-ranging vision. We are long-term players, maintaining our presence even during periods of economic or political turbulence.

But even as we continue this approach, we must give increasingly rigorous thought to how each local project will affect national development. We must look, in short, for places where our leverage can be greatest. This is why the Kampala Serena Hotel project is so important to us. For - as we look at the countries of East Africa - and at Uganda, in particular - we believe that the travel and leisure sector stands out as one that offers enormous unrealized potential.

AKFED has identified other priorities as well, of course. Basic infrastructure needs are high on our list - as is evidenced in Uganda by both the large Bujagali power development project and the innovative Rural Electrification project in the West Nile region. Another priority is to foster indigenous financial institutions - not only in commercial banking, but also in fields such as micro credit, lease finance, micro insurance and other financial products. Flexibility must be a constant watchword in a world which is changing at an ever-accelerating pace.

Let me conclude by underscoring, once again, a central point - which I hope will be remembered as decision makers in developing countries plan for the future. AKFED will continue to be as supportive and creative as possible in responding to the evolving demands of developing economies. Yes, we must look with care at the dividends we can produce for the co-investors in our projects. But in the end, what will count most for AKFED is what it can contribute to the quality of human life in the cities, provinces, countries and regions in which we function. That will be our most important dividend.

Thank you.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the Inauguration of the Ishkashim Bridge  
Ishkashim, Tajikistan, 31 October 2006**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
President Rahmonov  
Vice President Khalili  
Governor Niazmamadov  
Governor Munshi

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to be present with you today as we inaugurate the Ishkashim Bridge. It has always seemed to me that bridges are among the most powerful and important symbols in human society - symbols of connection, of cooperation and of harmony. When harmony breaks down and conflicts ensue, the destroying of bridges is usually among the most urgent targets. But when peace and healing come, then it is the construction and rehabilitation of bridges that marks our progress.

In the recent past, in this region, bridges have opened at Tem, Darwaz and Langar. Like them, the Ishkashim Bridge is a concrete expression of cooperation amongst the Governments of Tajikistan and Afghanistan and the Aga Khan Development Network. It symbolizes our common determination to help open up the region to new development and improved prosperity.

I would like, first of all, therefore, to express sincere gratitude, to the two national governments and to the local governments in both countries, for making a strong commitment to rehabilitate this Bridge, and for remaining steadfast in delivering on that commitment. Allow me also to express my deep appreciation to all the volunteers from the local communities who prepared these sites for today's ceremony.

Each of the bridges I have mentioned has had a considerable moral and symbolic value, inspiring a spirit of confidence, progress and hope. But these projects also have a very concrete economic value, allowing for a substantial expansion of productive exchange. People in both countries are granted unprecedented access to markets beyond their immediate frontiers. Goods originating in Pakistan can now make their way to Tajikistan. Products from China now have a fast road transit to Afghanistan.

The Ishkashim Bridge is not only a transit point, however. It is also a meeting place. Like the other bridges, it is a place where people from more remote settlements can gather to trade in goods and services. A widening variety of peoples can have access here to a widening variety of products. The market site at Ishkashim will surely have a salutary impact on the surrounding populations, and we are deeply grateful to UNDP's Border Management Program for Central Asia (the BOMCA) for building the market here as well as for their support to the border management posts at Tem and Darwaz.

The Aga Khan Development Network has contributed \$ 1,700,000 to the four bridges at Tem, Darwaz, Langar and Ishkashim, but we would like to go further than this, as next year we hope to build new bridges at Vanj and Shurobad. Since the beginning of this exciting programme, over 2000 tons of wheat, 500 tons of milk and 160 tons of beans have crossed from one country to the other, significantly increasing food security. The local cost of tea has dropped by a third, and salt is now available in the remotest areas of Afghan Darwaz. Jeeps and hundreds of tons of cement, household goods and fabrics are significantly more available to the peoples either side of the Pyanj than ever before. Hundreds of sick people have crossed the river to seek medical support from the hospitals here at Ishkashim, and at Darwaz and Khorog, and for the first time vehicles of up to 30 tons will be able to cross from one country to the other.

Links and meeting places created by the bridges do more than simply facilitate commerce. We exchange questions and answers. We trade in products, but we can also trade in ideas.

Communities on each side of the border will know one another better and be better able to help one another grow, prosper and share the lessons of life.

But let us not forget, as we celebrate this achievement, that these bridges bring with them a great responsibility. It is my hope and desire that what is carried across them – in whichever direction – is done for the purpose of creating happiness and health, wisdom and prosperity - in both the economic and the moral realms. Peoples who live on either side, and the authorities who govern them, together must assure security and regulatory enforcement, even as they work to facilitate safe passage – through an easier visa process.

It is my prayer today that the Ishkashim bridge will further join the peoples of this region and their neighbours, multiply the fruits of their labour, and bring harmony, stability and prosperity to all.

Thank You.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan  
on the occasion of the Signing of the Funding Agreement for the Global Centre  
for Pluralism - Ottawa, Canada, 25 October 2006**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
Prime Minister Harper  
Honorable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It was just eighteen months ago that the Government of Canada announced its decision to partner with the Ismaili Imamate and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in our Global Centre for Pluralism. What we welcomed at that time was a multi-faceted partnership—financial, yes, but also institutional and intellectual.

But our sense of partnership was not a new development. In fact, the AKDN and Canada have built a unique collaboration over nearly a quarter century, next year it will be 25 years of this partnership -- on a wide variety of projects in a wide variety of places—especially in South and Central Asia, East and West Africa, and the Middle East. We have a long history of path-breaking cooperation.

This successful collaboration, moreover, is deeply rooted in a remarkable convergence of values—our strong mutual dedication to the concept and practice of pluralism.

In my own role as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims over the past half century, I have come to appreciate the importance of pluralism in ever-expanding ways. The Ismaili community, after all, is itself a global family, spanning many geographies, cultures, languages and ethnicities—and sharing its life with people of many faiths. In addition, much of my work over this time has dealt with highly diverse societies in the developing world, often suffering from poverty, violence and despair. In such circumstances, a commitment to pluralism comes as no accident. For pluralism, in essence, is a deliberate set of choices that a society must make if it is to avoid costly conflict and harness the power of its diversity in solving human problems.

It will not surprise you that I am fascinated by Canada's experience as a successful pluralistic society. My active engagement with Canada began in the 1970's when many Ismailis found a welcoming refuge here in Canada from East African ethnic strife. Since that time, the Ismaili community has planted deep roots here, become self-sufficient, and can now make its own contributions to Canada's pluralistic model. That model, in turn, is one which can help to teach, and inspire the entire world.

Comme les Canadiens le savent si bien, l'idéal du pluralisme n'est pas nouveau en ce monde. Il a des fondations honorables et anciennes, y compris des racines profondes dans la tradition islamique. Ce qui est sans précédent aujourd'hui, c'est une société mondialisée, intimement interconnectée et extraordinairement interdépendante.

De nombreux facteurs ont contribué à ce nouvel ordre: la fin de la Guerre froide, les avancées techniques des transports et des communications, les migrations accélérées des peuples. Or l'impact de ces forces va probablement s'intensifier à l'avenir. A mon avis, ce à quoi nous faisons face actuellement, c'est à une nouvelle et éprouvante période de l'histoire humaine, où les valeurs et les pratiques pluralistes séculaires ne sont plus tout simplement désirables – elles sont devenues absolument essentielles – et pas seulement pour l'évolution future du monde mais également pour notre survie même.

The Ismaili Imamate and the Aga Khan Development Network are deeply grateful to the Government and the people of Canada for the continuing spirit of vision, generosity and mutual respect which has brought us to this landmark moment.

Indeed, our agreement itself exemplifies pluralism at work. It brings together people, ideas and resources from different continents and cultures, from religious and secular traditions, and from the public and the private sectors. And it continues in that spirit today.

The sense of momentum we feel at this hour will surely give us renewed confidence as we seek to connect our diversified pasts with our common future.

Our hope and expectation is that the Global Centre for Pluralism will become a vital force in our world for research, learning and dialogue, engaging Canadians from all walks of life, and joining hands with a widening array of partners.

I am grateful that the Government of Canada has contributed so generously to its material and intellectual resources. Making available the Old War Museum is a particularly generous and symbolic gesture. Let us replace war with peace. Our own commitment is to invest in this building so that it becomes a worthy testament to Canada's global leadership in the cause of pluralism.

Those who talk about an inevitable "clash of civilizations" can point today to an accumulating array of symptoms which sometimes seems to reflect their diagnosis.

I believe, however, that this diagnosis is wrong—that its symptoms are more dramatic than they are representative—and that these symptoms are rooted in human ignorance rather than human character.

The problem of ignorance is a problem that can be addressed. Perhaps it can even be ameliorated—but only if we go to work on our educational tasks with sustained energy, creativity and intelligence.

That is why we felt the Global Centre for Pluralism was needed. That is why the Global Centre for Pluralism exists today. And that is why the Global Centre for Pluralism holds such enormous promise for all of our tomorrows.

Thank You.

**Laudatory Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Die Quadriga Award Ceremony (Berlin, Germany)  
03 October 2006**

Distinguished Recipients and Laudators  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me mention at the outset why the Die Quadriga has such a special significance for me.

There is in today's ceremony a magnificent dimension which is the fact that the Quadriga Prize continually honours new stories --- and thus links a rich heritage to an ever-evolving future. The honour one feels in receiving the Award one year is profoundly reinforced the next year, as one presents the Award anew. Certainly that is my feeling today as we honour President Viktor Yuschenko of the Ukraine. Today his story now also becomes part of the Die Quadriga legacy.

The President's story is both personal and political --- built around enduring values as well as persistent challenges. It is the story of a leader who chose to serve others when service was inseparable from danger --- and who came to symbolize the hopes of millions.

President Yuschenko comes from a family of educators --- and he himself won academic distinction in the field of economics and finance. He developed the vital gift of a specialized expertise --- and he then devoted that expertise to the service of his country, helping to create its independent economy, its financial institutions, its new national currency, and its Central Bank. As the young leader of that Bank, he won the Global Finance award in 1995 as one of the world's top five Central Bankers. He went on to serve as Prime Minister --- as his country continued its economic progress.

Viktor Yuschenko became an expert in the ways that complex institutions work ---reconciling a pluralism of perspectives with a unity of purpose. It has been suggested that his personal passion for bee-keeping --- a family tradition for generations --- has been a continuing reminder from nature of how the harmony of a community can flourish when strong institutional habits respect a variety of social contributions.

Our honouree has also developed a close personal association with culture and the arts --- as a painter, sculptor, woodworker and collector in his personal life, and as a public defender and promoter of Ukraine's cultural heritage --- especially those art forms which are rooted in the history of the Ukrainian countryside and the hearts of the Ukrainian people. His public service has been an expression of his patriotism --- his love for his country's past, his dreams for its future.

Yet another aspect of our honouree's personal and professional story is his conviction that the future lies with the forces of popular sovereignty --- with the progress of freedom and democracy. And these are not abstract values for him --- they include a working commitment to the institutions that make democracy possible --- a credible election process, for example, reliable judicial systems, and a strong commitment to Freedom of Expression -- including the vital role of an independent press.

Just as the long drama of German reconciliation reached its climax on this day in 1989, so the recent story of Ukrainian freedom centres on two landmark events. The first came on July 16, 1990 --- with Parliament's declaration of Ukrainian independence and sovereignty. The meaning of that event for President Yuschenko is reflected in his decision to celebrate

that day each year by climbing the highest mountain peak in his country --- Mount Hervola --  
- symbolizing the ever-ascending aspirations of an independent Ukrainian nation.

A second set of events in the story of Ukrainian democracy days which will always be linked with the President's name, came less than two years ago. We all remember how the integrity of democratic processes were threatened, defended and finally vindicated with Mr. Yuschenko's election to the presidency. The world was watching those events ---and drawing inspiration from them, as the words "Orange Revolution" were entered forever into the global vocabulary of freedom.

In all of these ways then --- as a perceptive student of human institutions, --- as an ardent advocate of cultural traditions, --- and as a courageous voice of democratic aspirations, President Yuschenko adds today his own powerful chapter to the Die Quadriga story.

It is indeed a great honour for me to present him to you.



**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation  
Stone-Laying Ceremony of The Aga Khan Academy,  
Hyderabad, India, 22nd September 2006**

Your Excellency the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh  
Honorable Ministers  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies And Gentlemen  
Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Let me begin by thanking all of you for honoring us by joining in this celebration – at this truly magnificent site. We are most deeply grateful to all who helped to make this site available to our Academy program. Your generosity will be a continuing inspiration to us all.

Our celebration today is part of a long, unfolding story. It is, for me, a highly personal story – growing out of my family's active involvement through the years in the field of education – especially in the developing world.

It was just about a century ago that my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan, began to build a network of educational institutions in places where the Ismaili community had settled. This network would eventually include some 300 schools – 200 of which my grandfather opened personally.

In addition, he was the founding figure of Aligarh University, and I have continued that tradition through the establishment of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

The tradition I am describing, however, goes back much further than one hundred years. For it was some one thousand years ago that my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. For well over a millennium, the pursuit of knowledge has been a central element in our tradition.

Against this background, you can understand why this new educational beginning means so much to us.

But even while we renew a rich tradition inherited from the past, we are also looking deeply into the future. What we begin here may not have its full impact in any of our lifetimes. But the beginnings we undertake today may well be among the most important things we will ever do.

I would like to speak initially about the logic behind the Aga Khan Academies program – to look at its philosophical underpinnings. For unless those foundations are sound, whatever we build will be inherently vulnerable.

We are taking our time in laying those foundations. We are designing for the long-range future and we have thought long and hard about our goals and how to achieve them. We have launched research projects and surveys. We have done our homework.

At the very heart of our conclusions – is one, central conviction: the key to future progress in the developing world will be its ability to identify, to develop, and to retain expert and effective home-grown leadership.

In our lifetimes, the developing world has looked in various directions for the key to progress. For a while, it was thought to be enough that indigenous peoples simply throw off the yoke of colonialism – which for some was the most important barrier to fulfillment and progress. This viewpoint often evolved into a hope that reasserting cultural identity would unlock the future – and education sometimes became mainly a matter of tapping into ancient wisdom, expressed in distinctive languages. In many places, the promises of a charismatic ruler also captured the public imagination – the mystique of the romantic hero – and public education sometimes slipped into relative insignificance.

Over time, as frustration mounted, other cures were entertained in parts of the developing world. Ideologies of the left and the right came into vogue – ranging from the siren songs of state socialism on one side to the allure of unrestrained capitalism on the other. The demands of dogma came to replace the disciplines of reason – and education too often turned into indoctrination.

But none of these approaches proved adequate to the demands of their times – and all of them seem increasingly inadequate to the demands of the present. A different approach has been needed. I would note that the people of this city and this region were among those who first came to realize this fact – and to respond impressively to the challenge.

That response – here and elsewhere – has had, as its centerpiece, a distinctive intellectual style and a creative approach to leadership. As the pace of history has accelerated, agility and adaptability have become more important qualities than mere size or strength, and the race of life has gone increasingly to the nimble and the knowledgeable.

As the economic arena has been globalizing, openness and flexibility have become prerequisites for progress, and success has gone more and more to those who can connect and respond.

Specialized expertise, pragmatic temperament, mental resourcefulness – these are increasingly the keys to effective leadership – along with a capacity for intellectual humility which keeps one's mind constantly open to a variety of viewpoints and welcomes pluralistic exchange.

In such a world, the most important thing a student can learn is the ability to keep on learning.

What these developments mean is human resources have become more important than natural resources in determining the wealth of a society. And yet, there are still too many communities in which the true potential of the human resource base is sadly underdeveloped.

Too many of those who ought to be leading their communities in the hopeful world of tomorrow, are being left behind in the real world of today. Because good schools are not available to them early in life, they are often blocked from such opportunities as they grow older. And even those who do break through, into a world of wider educational opportunity, too often also break out – and leave their home regions. The result is a widening gap between the expert and effective leadership these communities need – and the leadership their educational systems are likely to deliver.

Am I saying that we should focus only on educating a leadership elite? Not by any means. Broad public education is still an essential obligation of a just society. But I also believe that the best interests of every society will be best served if its future leaders can be adequately prepared for an unusually demanding future – if its outstanding students, in short, can be given an outstanding education.

Every society develops and depends on some set of leaders – but the great question is how those leaders are developed and chosen. For much of human history, leaders were born into their roles, or they fought their way in – or they bought their way in. Elites were normally based on physical power, or accumulated wealth, or inherited claims to authority.

But social progress can be greatest when aristocracies of class give way to aristocracies of talent – or to use an even better term – to meritocracies.

The well-led society of the future, in my view, will be a meritocracy – where leadership roles are based on personal and intellectual excellence.

Our goal, then, is not to provide special education for a privileged elite – but to provide an exceptional education for the truly exceptional.

This is the fundamental philosophy undergirding our Academies program.

How, then, will these goals be realized in practice? In all candor, some of our plans may have few precedents in this country and may strike some observers here as new and distinctive. But we have seen them tested in other contexts and believe they represent worthwhile challenges.

Our plans begin with the realization that governments alone cannot meet the educational challenges of the 21st century. Nor can private institutions which are constrained by the necessity to earn a profit. The answer lies in the expanding role of civil society – in voluntary institutions which are not governmental but which are nonetheless dedicated to community values and the public good. We hope that the Aga Khan Academies will become leading exemplars of civil society's potential role.

Access to these schools (each of which will enroll 700 to 1200 young men and women) will thus be based solely on merit – not on financial resources. Intellectual capacity and intrinsic character will determine not only who is admitted, but who is actively recruited – for matriculation at these schools must go beyond passive selection and include an active outreach effort.

Once admitted, students will pursue a diverse and balanced curriculum, one which will evolve constantly as learning expands at an unprecedented pace. The best schools of the future will be those which select wisely just what learning will best help prepare students for an unpredictable future.

Our curriculum will be designed to qualify students for the widely-respected International Baccalaureate degree – and beyond that, for admission to the very best university programs that may interest them – in India and in every part of the world.

The International Baccalaureate program will help us prepare students to meet world-class standards – joining a community of some 1800 other schools who use the IB framework, including highly respected institutions here in India. Using that framework, we can ensure that the education we provide will be tied to global concerns and keep pace with global developments.

But the Aga Khan Academies will also have their own areas of special emphasis, including: an explicit concern for the value of pluralism, a strong emphasis on the ethical dimensions of life, a more specialized knowledge of how global economics work, and a focus on comparative political systems.

We are often told these days that tension and violence in much of the world grows out of some fundamental clash of civilizations – especially a clash between the Islamic world and the West. I disagree with that assessment. In my view, it is a clash of ignorances which is to blame. The Academies will seek to remedy such ignorances through the broad study of a variety of world cultures, including the Study of Muslim Civilizations, a subject which is often overlooked in some parts of the world today.

The principal language of instruction will be English – today's primary language of global connection. But connectedness will also be enhanced in other ways. Every graduate will at least be bilingual, for example, and many will be trilingual. In his or her home Academy, a student will not only meet other students from a variety of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds – but they will get to know one another as friends and neighbors – something that residential schools are well-equipped to foster. And many will study for at least a year outside their home cultures, as well.

Each of our Academies can be thought of, in sum, as a center for cross-cultural education. And the City of Hyderabad, with its rich history as a meeting point for different cultures, including the Christian, Hindu and Muslim traditions, will provide a particularly appropriate setting.

The spirit of pluralism will be further enhanced by the fact that each Academy will be part of a larger network. All of them will be linked electronically and will serve students and faculty

throughout the system through video-conferencing and other distance learning technology--as well as through programs whereby teachers and students will work for a time in a distant setting.

Building a global network of Academies will enable us to pursue simultaneously two sometimes divergent goals. On the one hand we want our students to understand and appreciate the variety of the world and the diversity of its peoples. On the other hand, we want to ensure a certain consistency in the quality of instruction and in the pursuit of core values. Building a wide network of schools around the same fundamental principles will allow us to pursue both of these objectives.

There will be one teacher for about every seven students at our Academies, and the teachers will not only be actively recruited, carefully selected and equitably compensated, but they will also be expertly trained and continually retrained. World class standards are ever-evolving standards—staying on the cutting edge is a not a static process. Not only will we need highly professional instructors, but we must also be sure that our instructors are well-instructed. State-of-the art teaching technologies will help our faculties as they reach for this goal.

In short, we seek not only to train the next generation of expert leaders, but also to develop a professional corps of world-class teachers. Emblematic of this commitment is the fact that a Professional Development Center, focused on the improvement of teaching, will be part of the central Academic Building on each of our campuses. If all goes well, teachers at the Aga Khan Academies will become role models not only for their students, but for other teachers in their communities.

We also realize, as I have already suggested, that much of what our students will learn over time they will learn from one another – not only in formal classroom settings but in residential and social contexts, in a wide range of extracurricular activities and in community service projects, as well. The Academies will be concerned with the whole of the human being – mind, body and spirit – and with the broad range of human aspiration – intellectual, moral, artistic, physical and spiritual. The fact that these are residential academies will contribute enormously to these broad objectives, encouraging students to identify more completely with the school, to help lead it and shape its environment.

We envision that our graduates will emerge as well rounded men and women, enriched by their participation not only in rich learning communities but in rich living communities as well.

All of these commitments imply a special emphasis on the quality of our physical resources – on the built environment, as it is often called – including the quality of architectural design. As it has so often been said, we first shape our buildings, and then they shape us.

In sum, the Academies will be serious, focused, rigorous environments – but at the same time they will be spacious and joyous places. They will operate on the cutting edge of knowledge and pedagogy, but they will be rooted in history and steeped in tradition.

It is such an institution that I hope to bring to the city of Hyderabad.

Thank You.

## **Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Commencement Ceremony of the American University in Cairo - June 15, 2006**

President Arnold,  
Members of the Board of Trustees,  
Members of the Faculty and Administration,  
Parents and Families,  
Distinguished guests,  
And, most importantly, the Graduating Class  
Congratulations

I deeply appreciate your warm welcome and I am most grateful for the wonderful honor you are conferring upon me through this honorary degree. I have long been a great admirer of the American University in Cairo—and I am proud that I can now count myself among your alumni.

This is a very special University. For 87 years, it has been a place for creative and constructive interaction between East and West. Its success has inspired those who see the future as one of intercultural cooperation and collaboration, rather than intercultural clash.

The new campus you are building will be a splendid physical manifestation of that vision. But it is even more important that this vision be manifested in the years ahead in your own, individual lives.

Most of you share with me a common cultural background. I was born into a Muslim family, educated as a Muslim and spent many years studying Muslim history. Then, almost fifty years ago, I became Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, responsible both for interpreting the faith to the community, and for helping improve the quality and security of the community's daily life. From that day to this, my dominant preoccupation has been with the developing world, and particularly the countries of South and Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where Ismailis are concentrated among other Muslim populations.

Over these five decades, I have watched that world oscillate constantly, between hope and disappointment.

Too often, disappointment has been the dominant story. And too often the dominant response to disappointment has been to embrace false hopes—from dogmatic socialism to romantic nationalism, from irrational tribalism to runaway individualism.

Another response has been to revisit past glories—contrasting them with contemporary setbacks. Many Muslims in particular, recall a time when Islamic civilizations were on the cutting edge of world progress. They dream of renewing that heritage. But they are not sure how to do so.

For some, renewal means recovering old forms of the faith —while for others it means rejecting faith itself. For some, recovering glory means opposition to the West, its cultures and its economic systems --while for others it means partnering with non-Islamic societies.

As university graduates, you will be fashioning your own visions for the future and your own ways of fulfilling them. But as you do, I hope you will honor the values of this University. For the one ingredient which holds particular promise in the search for fulfillment, is the search for knowledge.

From the very beginnings of Islam, the search for knowledge has been central to our cultures. I think of the words of Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib, the first hereditary Imam of the Shia Muslims, and the last of the four rightly-guided Caliphs after the passing away of the Prophet (may peace be upon Him). In his teachings, Hazrat Ali emphasized that “No honour is like knowledge.” And then he added that “No belief is like modesty and patience, no attainment is like humility, no power is like forbearance, and no support is more reliable than consultation.”

Notice that the virtues endorsed by Hazrat Ali are qualities which subordinate the self and emphasize others ---modesty, patience, humility, forbearance and consultation. What he thus is telling us, is that we find knowledge best by admitting first what it is we do not know, and by opening our minds to what others can teach us.

At various times in world history, the locus of knowledge has moved from one centre of learning to another. Europe once came to the Islamic world for intellectual enrichment—and even rediscovered its own classical roots by searching in Arabic texts.

Astronomy, the so-called “Science of the Universe” was a field of particular distinction in Islamic civilization.—in sharp contrast to the weakness of Islamic countries in the field of Space research today. In this field, as in others, intellectual leadership is never a static condition, but something which is always shifting and always dynamic.

Indeed, Islamic culture in past centuries was distinctly dynamic--constantly reaching out--both to India and the East and to Europe and the West-- for enrichment. Throughout history, confident cultures from every part of the world have been eager to seek new learning, not to dilute inherited traditions but to amplify and extend them. The great civilizations of Islam were prime examples.

More than a millennium ago, as early as the 8th century, the original Abbasids, ruling as Caliphs in Baghdad, set up academies and libraries where new knowledge was honored--independent of its source. The Fatimids continued this tradition—reaching out from their base in Cairo—established in the 10th century—to welcome learned figures from distant lands. A bit later, Ghazni, in Afghanistan, became another center of learning—again by reaching out.

By the time of the Safavid era—halfway through the second millennium--cultural leaders of all types--mathematicians, scientists, painters, musicians, and writers-- were moving constantly from country to country and court to court-- from the Safavid centers in Iran to the Mughal courts of India, and the Uzbek court at Bukhara in what is now Uzbekistan.

The Ottoman Caliphs in Turkey continued in this proactive tradition in the 19th century, borrowing now from primarily western models. The Ottomans paved the way for the immense modernizations associated with Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the twentieth century. Ataturk's reforms brought opposition from ulama and others. Nonetheless, scholars have concluded that “a great part of the population did not see Ataturk and his reforms as hostile to Islam.” Many saw them as extending a well-established pattern.

I believe that same pattern must be our model today. In keeping with our past traditions, and in response to our present needs, we must to go out and find the best of the world's knowledge—wherever it exists.

But accessing knowledge, is only the first step. The second step--the application of knowledge, is also demanding. Knowledge, after all, can be used well or poorly —for good or evil purposes.

Once we have acquired knowledge, it is important that the ethical guidelines of faith be invoked, helping us apply what we have learned to the highest possible ends. And it is also important that those ends be related to the practical needs of our peoples.

Throughout history, the application of knowledge has often been determined by a few powerful rulers—or by highly dominant governments. But I believe the hour is passing for these outmoded, top-heavy ways of deciding how knowledge should be utilized.

Government's role will not disappear, of course. But a variety of new factors are at play--the vast complexity of economic life, the growing pluralism of society, the splintering and decentralization of information media, and the fragmentation of cultural identity. And all of these factors argue for a more diverse approach.

The great effort of humankind to organize itself for the common good must change with changing environments. For thousands of years our environment was largely agricultural, where value attached primarily to land. Three centuries ago, agriculture began to yield to industry, as machines took center stage, along with standardized processes and the efficiencies of scale.

But in the last few decades, Agricultural Society and Industrial Society have gradually been displaced by what has been called the Knowledge Society, propelled by new digital technology and the expansion of cyberspace.

As a result, enormous social influence has been transferred from the owners and workers of farms and factories, to those whom we now call “Knowledge Workers,” people who create and exchange information. For them, power attaches more to ideas and values than to money or physical force. Among them, power itself is widely dispersed.

In such a time, we need to depend less on government and more on what I call the institutions of civil society. These civil institutions are normally private and voluntary—but they are committed to the public good. They include entities dedicated to education and research, labour and commerce, health and the environment, culture and religion.

Civil institutions can thrive even when governments falter. But they cannot thrive unless governments and citizens also place a high value on diversity, and create a supportive environment for non-governmental initiatives. The graduates of the American University in Cairo can play a critical role in that process.

To do this however, will mean confronting the “knowledge deficit” which now plagues too many Islamic societies. Happily, technology has given us wonderful new ways of sharing knowledge. Rather than sending scholars over thousands of miles and scores of years, from library to library and academy to academy, today we can simply click in a matter of seconds onto a wide variety of appropriate websites. But, first, we must acknowledge what it is that we do not yet know —committing ourselves to continued learning and accepting the fact that useful knowledge will often be found by reaching beyond the traditional barriers of both geography and culture.

The most valuable part of your University education may not lie merely in the content of what you have learned here, but in your improved ability to go on learning for the rest of your lives.

One certain contributor to the knowledge deficit in large parts of the Islamic world has been the disconnect between weak universities, and the requirements of modern economies. We must understand the intimate connection between the economy of any country and the research agenda of its universities —the fact that research requires the intimate involvement of economic institutions, and that economic development requires the support and the stimulus of cutting edge research.

All of this will help explain why our Aga Khan Development Network has placed such a high priority on the development of Aga Khan supported Universities and Academies in parts of the developing world. And it will also explain my admiration for the work of this University. Along with similar, sister institutions, AUC has effectively combined values and requirements of the Islamic world with educational resources from the Western world. In doing so, it marks a promising pathway to the future.

As graduates of this university, you have already begun your journey down that path—and you are ideally placed to lead others along it. This calling is your special responsibility. But you can take up this obligation knowing that you are well equipped for the road ahead.

In the long sweep of human history, Egypt has been among the first and most distinguished centers of world learning. Building on those traditions, this country and this region can again play a central role in the Knowledge Society of the future—and each of you can be a vital part of that exciting process.

May Allah accompany you.

Thank You.



## **Address by His Highness the Aga Khan to the Tutzing Evangelical Academy Upon Receiving the "Tolerance" Award - 20 May 2006**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
Herr Minister  
Dr Greiner  
Herr Landesbischof  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Minister Steinmeier has been very generous in his remarks -- for which I thank him most sincerely. And I would like to take this occasion at the opening of these comments, to tell him how much all the people who work with me around the world appreciate the support and the partnership of the people and Government of Germany in the work that we are doing. You have brought imagination, you have brought sophistication, you have brought flexibility to areas of need, areas of intellectual activity, which we consider unique, and I thank you for that.

In these times of misunderstanding and mistrust, I applaud the realistic outlook on international affairs that His Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs brings to his work. I know that he views a constructive relationship between the West and the Muslim world as critical to global peace and stability, and I am grateful for his contributions to that goal.

I am also deeply grateful for your kind invitation and your generous award. This honor takes on special distinction for me because of the very high value I attach to the award's purpose, that is to increase awareness and respect between peoples and cultures through a discussion of political, cultural and religious topics. It is to these subjects that I will address my comments today.

In doing so, I would like to draw on my personal experience, as one who was educated in the West, but who has spent nearly 50 years working largely in the developing world. My particular preoccupation during this time has been with the countries of South and Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where the Ismaili community is concentrated.

Since I became Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, I have watched my world -- or should I say the entire world? -- oscillate between promise and disappointment. In many cases, the disappointments can be attributed to the absence of a culture of tolerance.

Of course my experience includes the religious faith in which I have been nurtured. I was born into a Muslim family, educated as a Muslim and spent many years studying the history of the faith and its civilizations. My commitment to the principle of tolerance also grows out of that commitment.

One of the central elements of the Islamic faith is the inseparable nature of faith and world. The two are so deeply intertwined that one cannot imagine their separation. They constitute a "Way of Life." The role and responsibility of an Imam, therefore, is both to interpret the faith to the community, and also to do all within his means to improve the quality, and security, of their daily lives.

I am fascinated and somewhat frustrated when representatives of the western world -- especially the western media -- try to describe the work of our Aga Khan Development Network in fields like education, health, the economy, media, and the building of social infrastructure.

Reflecting a certain historical tendency of the West to separate the secular from the religious, they often describe it either as philanthropy or entrepreneurship. What is not understood is that this work is for us a part of our institutional responsibility -- it flows from the mandate of the office of Imam to improve the quality of worldly life for the concerned communities.

Our spiritual understandings, like those of your Academy, are rooted, of course, in ancient teachings. In the case of Islam, there are two touchstones which I have long treasured and sought to apply. The first affirms the unity of the human race, as expressed in the Holy Qu'ran where God, as revealed through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, says the following:

"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women." (4:1)

This remarkable verse speaks both of the inherent diversity of mankind -- the "multitude" -- and of the unity of mankind -- the "single soul created by a single Creator" -- a spiritual legacy which distinguishes the human race from all other forms of life.

The second passage I would cite today is from the first hereditary Imam of the Shi'a community Hazrat Ali. As you know, the Shi'a divided from the Sunni after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Hazrat Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was, in Shi'a belief, named by the Prophet to be the Legitimate Authority for the interpretation of the faith. For the Shi'a today, all over the world, he is regarded as the first Imam.

I cite Hazrat Ali's words so that you may understand the spirit in which I have attempted to fulfill the mandate left to me as the 49th hereditary [Ismaili] Imam after the death of my grandfather. I quote:

"No belief is like modesty and patience, no attainment is like humility, no honour is like knowledge, no power is like forbearance, and no support is more reliable than consultation."

Hazrat Ali's regard for knowledge reinforces the compatibility of faith and the world. And his respect for consultation is, in my view, a commitment to tolerant and open-hearted democratic processes.

These Islamic ideals, of course, have also been emphasized by other great religions. Despite the long history of religious conflict, there is a long counter-history of religious focus on tolerance as a central virtue -- on welcoming the stranger and loving one's neighbour.

"Who is my Neighbor?" - one of the central Christian narratives asks. Jesus responds by telling the story of the Good Samaritan -- a foreigner, a representative of the Other, who reaches out sympathetically, across ethnic and cultural divides, to show mercy to the fallen stranger at the side of the road.

I know you will find nothing unusual in this discussion given your own spiritual foundations. But it is striking to me how many modern thinkers are still disposed to link tolerance with secularism -- and religion with intolerance. In their eyes -- and often in the public's eyes I fear -- religion is seen as part of the problem and not part of the solution.

To be sure, there are reasons why this impression exists. Throughout history we find terrible chapters in which religious conflict brought frightening results. Sometimes, a part of the problem grew; it came from proselytizing -- in which faith was not so much shared as imposed. Again in our day, many ostensibly religious voices aggressively affirm a single faith by denying or condemning others.

When people speak these days, about an inevitable "Clash of Civilizations" in our world, what they often mean, I fear, is an inevitable "Clash of Religions." But I would use different terminology altogether. The essential problem, as I see it, in relations between the Muslim world and the West is "A Clash of Ignorance." And what I would prescribe -- as an essential first step -- is a concentrated educational effort.

Instead of shouting at one another, we must listen to one another -- and learn from one another. As we do, one of our first lessons might well center on those powerful but often

neglected chapters in history when Islamic and European cultures interacted cooperatively -- constructively and creatively -- to help realize some of civilization's peak achievements.

[I think] We must also understand the vast diversity that exists within individual faiths and cultures, including the diversity now at play within the Islamic world. And we must acknowledge that while such pluralism can be healthy and enriching -- it can also become destructive and deadly as it did for the Christian community in Europe half a millennium ago and it does in some parts of the Islamic world at the start of this new millennium.

Intolerance can thus result from one sort of presumably religious attitude, but profound tolerance can also be a deeply religious commitment.

The spiritual roots of tolerance include, it seems to me, a respect for individual conscience -- seen as a Gift of God -- as well as a posture of religious humility before the Divine. It is by accepting our human limits that we can come to see The Other as a fellow seeker of truth -- and to find common ground in our common quest.

Let me emphasize again, however, that spirituality should not become a way of escaping from the world but rather a way of more actively engaging in it.

There are a variety of ways in which we can work to build a culture of tolerance in a turbulent time. Many of them are reflected in the work of our Aga Khan Development Network. One example is the new Global Centre for Pluralism which we recently established in Ottawa -- in partnership with the Canadian government. The Centre sees the minority experience of the Ismaili community as a helpful resource in the quest for a constructive pluralism -- along with the pluralistic model of Canada itself.

The challenges to tolerance are manifold -- in both the developed and the developing world. The revolutionary impact of globalization means that many who never met before now intermingle continually -- through modern communications media and through direct contact. The migration of populations around the world is at record levels; peoples who once lived across the world from one another, now live across the street.

But societies which have grown more pluralistic in makeup, are not always growing more pluralistic in spirit. What is needed -- all across the world -- is a new "cosmopolitan ethic"-- rooted in a strong culture of tolerance.

I recall a conversation I had some years ago with Jim Wolfensohn, then President of the World Bank, about perceptions of happiness in various societies -- and especially among the very poor. We decided that we should 'listen to the voices of the poor'-- and the World Bank commissioned an important study on that topic. One of its conclusions was that the emotion of "fear" was a central factor holding these societies back. Such fear could have many forms: fear of tyrants, fear of nature, fear of ill health, fear of corruption, violence, scarcity and impoverishment. And such fears inevitably became a source of intolerance.

There is a human impulse it seems -- fed by fear -- to define "identity" in negative terms. We often determine "who we are"-- by determining who we are against. This fragmenting impulse not only separates peoples from one another, it also subdivides communities -- and then it subdivides the subdivisions. It leads to what some have called the "fraying" of society -- in which communities come to resemble a worn out cloth -- as its tight weave separates into individual strands.

But the human inclination to divisiveness is accompanied, I deeply believe, by a profound human impulse to bridge divisions. And often the more secure we are in our own identities, the more effective we can be in reaching out to others.

If our animosities are born out of fear, then confident generosity is born out of hope. One of the central lessons I have learned after a half century of working in the developing world is that the replacement of fear by hope is probably the single most powerful trampoline of progress.

Even in the poorest and most isolated communities, we have found that decades, if not centuries, of angry conflict can be turned around by giving people reasons to work together toward a better future -- in other words, by giving them reasons to hope. And when hope takes root, then a new level of tolerance is possible, though it may have been unknown for years, and years, and years.

Tolerance which grows out of hope is more than a negative virtue -- more than a convenient way to ease sectarian tensions or foster social stability -- more than a sense of forbearance when the views of others clash with our own. Instead, seen not as a pallid religious compromise but as a sacred religious imperative, tolerance can become a powerful, positive force, one which allows all of us to expand our horizons -- and enrich our lives.

Thank you for the honour of this Award.

## **Address by His Highness the Aga Khan to the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University - May 15, 2006**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Dean Anderson,  
Faculty Members,  
Graduating Students and Parents,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply honoured to be here and deeply grateful for your invitation. This is a memorable day both in your personal lives and in the life of this School—and I am pleased to share in it.

They say that a good graduation speaker is someone who can talk in someone else's sleep. I hope we can break that pattern today.

An opinion poll reported recently that what American graduates want as their graduation speaker more than anyone is "someone they could relate to". But that test, says the poll, showed the most popular university speaker in recent years was the Sesame street character, Kermit the Frog. I found it a bit intimidating to wonder just where the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims would rank on the "relating" scale in comparison to Kermit the Frog.

Ceremonies of the sort we observe today are valuable because they help us to bridge the past and the future – to see ourselves as players in larger narratives. This School's narrative is now sixty years old – embracing the whole of the postwar period. In that time you have dramatically broadened both the communities you serve and the programs through which you serve them.

Your history reflects a continuing conviction that the challenges of our times are fundamentally global ones – calling both for multi-disciplinary and multi-national responses.

Even as SIPA marks its 60th anniversary, I am approaching an anniversary of my own – the 50th anniversary next year of my role as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

While I was educated in the West, my perspective over these fifty years has been profoundly shaped by the countries of South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa, where the Ismaili people live and where they are largely concentrated. For five decades, that has been my world – my virtually permanent preoccupation. And it is out of that experience that I speak today.

For the developing world, the past half-century has been a time of recurring hope and frequent disappointment. Great waves of change have washed over the landscape – from the crumbling of colonial hegemonies in mid century to the recent collapse of communist empires. But too often, what rushed in to replace the old order were empty hopes—not only the false allure of state socialism, non-alignment, and single-party rule, but also the false glories of romantic nationalism and narrow tribalism, and the false dawn of runaway individualism.

There have been welcome exceptions to this pattern, of course. But too often, one step forward has been accompanied by two steps back. Hope for the future has often meant hope for survival, not hope for progress. The old order yielded its place, but a new world was not ready to be born.

Today, this sense of frustration is compounded – both in rich and poor nations – by a host of new challenges. They range from changing weather patterns to mutating viruses, from new digital and bio-genetic technologies to new patterns of family life and a new intermingling of cultures.

As the world economy integrates, global migrations are reaching record levels. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 developed countries of the OECD. Once homogenous societies are becoming distinctly multi-cultural.

Meanwhile, the gap widens between rich countries and poor. Populations explode and the environment deteriorates. The nation-state itself is newly challenged by the influence of non-state forces—including global crime and terrorism.

Whenever I sit down with leading thinkers and policy makers – I come away with a haunting question. Why is it, given the scope of our collective learning – unprecedented in human history – that we have such difficulty in controlling these developments? Why is our growing intellectual mastery of the world so often accompanied in practice by a growing sense of drift?

My response to that question focuses increasingly on the fact that democratic institutions have not lived up to their potential. In both the developed and the developing world, the promise of democracy has too often been disappointed.

For many centuries, enlightened people have argued that democracy was the key to social progress. But today, that contention is in dispute.

In countries where I am directly involved, the 21st century has already experienced at least a half-dozen constitutional crises. The sad fact – hard to swallow and difficult to deny – is that nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorized not merely as failed states – but as “failed democracies.”

Our central challenge in this new century – as leaders and future leaders of our world – is to renew the democratic promise.

The saving grace which democratic systems are most likely to possess, after all, is that they are self-correcting. A system of public accountability still provides the best hope for change without violence. And that virtue alone redeems the entire concept. It explains Churchill's famous view that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all others.

Our challenge is not to find alternatives to democracy, but to find more and better ways to make democracy work.

In responding to that challenge today, I would like to make four observations – four suggestions for addressing our democratic disappointments and advancing our democratic hopes.

My comments involve, first, the need for greater flexibility in defining the paths to democracy; secondly, the need for greater diversity in the institutions which participate in democratic life; thirdly, the need to expand the public's capacity for democracy; and finally, the need to strengthen public integrity-- on which democracy rests. Let me say a few words about each.

My first concern is that we must define the paths to democracy more flexibly. We like to say that democracy involves a pluralistic approach to life – but too seldom do we take a pluralistic approach to democracy. Too often, we insist that democracies must all follow a similar script – evolving at a similar pace – without recognizing that different circumstances may call for different constructs.

The ultimate recourse in any democracy must be to the concept of popular sovereignty. But within that concept there is room for variation. One size need not fit all – and trying to make one size fit all can be a recipe for failure.

The world's most successful democracies have had widely differing histories – each taking its own shape according to its own timetable.

How is power best divided and balanced? How should secular and spiritual allegiances interact? How can traditional authority – even monarchical authority – relate to democratic

frameworks? How is the integrity of minority cultures and faith systems best reconciled with majority rule?

It is simplistic to wish that our democratic destinations should be similar – that they cannot be reached by many paths. The democratic spirit of freedom and flexibility must begin with our definitions of democracy itself.

Even as we think more flexibly about democracy, we should also consider a second goal: diversifying the institutions of democratic life.

One of the reasons that governments often fail is that we depend too much on them. We invest too many hopes in political promises and we entrust too many tasks to political regimes.

Governments alone do not make democracy work. The most successful democracies are those in which the non-governmental institutions of “civil society” also play a vital role.

Civil society is powered by private voluntary energies, but it is committed to the public good. It includes institutions of education, health, science and research. It embraces professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts organizations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment.

Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government, we discount the impact of civil society, including the potential of constructive NGO's. But we can no longer afford that outlook. Meeting the realities of a complex world will require a strengthened array of civic institutions. They spur social progress – even when governments falter, and because they are so intimately connected to the public, they can predict new patterns and identify new problems with particular sensitivity.

But such developments cannot be coerced. They require an encouraging, enabling environment, supported by a broad public enthusiasm for social goals. And let me be clear: I am here because I believe SIPA, with its annual outpouring of able graduates, can make an enormous worldwide contribution to such a response.

The development of civil society can also help meet the rising challenge of cultural diversity. As communities become more pluralistic in fact, they must also become more pluralistic in spirit. A vibrant civil society can give diverse constituencies effective ways to express and preserve their distinct identities, even as they interact with new neighbours.

We are often told that increased contact among cultures will inevitably produce a “Clash of Civilizations,” particularly between Islam and the West. Such predictions could become self-fulfilling prophecies if enough people believe them. But that need not, and must not, be the case.

The true problem we face is what I would call a “Clash of Ignorance” – on both sides – one which neglects, for example, a long history of respect and cooperation between Islamic and Western peoples, and their respective civilisations.

This is an appropriate place to recall how North American history was shaped over the centuries by diverse cultural groups. In the future as in the past, such diversity can be an engine of enormous creativity – if it is sustained by what I would call “a new cosmopolitan ethic”. To encourage that process, the Aga Khan Development Network has recently formed a partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. Drawing on both the Ismaili experience and the pluralistic model of Canada itself, the Centre recognizes that we cannot make the world safe for democracy unless we also make the world safe for diversity – and that strengthening can be achieved by the institutions of civil society. They can contribute significantly to that goal.

My third point involves the public capacity for democratic government. This is a problem we too often treat with too much sentimentality, reluctant to acknowledge that democratic publics are not always all-wise.

Inadequate public communication is part of the problem. Driven by short-term circulation and profit goals, media increasingly tell audiences what they want to hear rather than what they ought to hear. And what too many people want is not to be informed, but to be entertained.

One result is the inadequacy of international news. I am told that world news now represents a substantially lower percentage of mainstream American news than it did a generation ago. Thanks to the Internet, specialists can get more information from more places than ever before. But for the general public, in America and elsewhere, global information has declined, while global involvements have expanded.

If better communication is one part of the answer, better education is another. This means, above all, developing new curricula which will meet new demands – especially in developing countries. We must do more to prepare the leaders of the 21st century for economic life in a global marketplace, for cultural life in pluralistic societies, for political life in complex democracies. Our system of Aga Khan-sponsored universities and academies is working throughout the developing world to create new educational models. But the scale of our work only begins to address the enormity of the challenge.

Improved communication and education can be helpful, but we also must be realistic about public capabilities. I believe, for example, that publics are too often asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. In recent months, both in Africa and in Asia – new national constitutions have been left to the mercies of mass public referenda – posing complex, theoretical issues well beyond the ability of politicians to explain, and publics to master. Nor is this matter unique to the developing world. We saw a similar pattern last year when the French public rejected a new European constitutional treaty that was 474 pages long.

Democracies need to distinguish responsibly between the prerogatives of the people and the obligations of their leaders. And leaders must meet their obligations. When democracies fail, it is usually because publics have grown impatient with ineffectual leaders and governments.

When parliaments lack the structure or expertise to grapple with complex problems – or when a system of checks and balances stymies action rather than refining it – then disenchanted publics will often turn to autocrats. The UN Development Program recently reported, for example, that 55 percent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress. There, in too many cases progress and democracy have not gone hand in hand.

The best way to redeem the concept of democracy around the world is to improve the results it delivers. Developed countries, rather than talking so much about democracy on the conceptual level, must do more – much more – to help democracy work on a practical level. Our goal must be “fully functioning democracies” – which bring genuine improvements in the quality of life for their peoples. We must not force publics to choose between democratic government and competent government.

This brings me to my final topic: the need for a sense of greater public integrity. Expanding the number of people who share social power is only half the battle. The critical question is how such power is used. How can we inspire people to reach beyond rampant materialism, self-indulgent individualism, and unprincipled relativism.

One answer is to augment our focus on personal prerogatives and individual rights, with an expanded concern for personal responsibilities and communal goals. A passion for justice, the quest for equality, a respect for tolerance, a dedication to human dignity – these are universal human values which are broadly shared across divisions of class, race, language, faith and geography. They constitute what classical philosophers – in the East and West alike – have described as human “virtue” – not merely the absence of negative restraints on



individual freedom, but also a set of positive responsibilities, moral disciplines which prevent liberty from turning into license.

Historically, one of the most powerful resources for any culture has been the sense that it is heading somewhere, that tomorrow will be better than today, that there is reason to embrace what I would call “a narrative of progress.”

The right of individuals to look for a better quality of life within their own life-spans – and to build toward a better life for their children – these are personal aspirations which must become public values.

But a healthy sense of public integrity, in my view, will be difficult to nurture over time without a strong religious underpinning. In the Islamic tradition, the conduct of one’s worldly life is inseparably intertwined with the concerns of one’s spiritual life – and one cannot talk about integrity without also talking about faith.

For Islam, the importance of this intersection is an item of faith, such a profound melding of worldly concerns and spiritual ideals that one cannot imagine one without the other. The two belong together. They constitute “a way of life.”

From that perspective, I would put high among our priorities, both within and outside the Islamic world, the need to renew our spiritual traditions. To be sure, religious freedom is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion – then I fear we will soon be lost on a bleak and barren landscape – with no compass or roadmap, no sense of ultimate direction.

I fully understand the West’s historic commitment to separating the secular from the religious. But for many non-Westerners, including most Muslims, the realms of faith and of worldly affairs cannot be antithetical. If “modernism” lacks a spiritual dimension, it will look like materialism. And if the modernizing influence of the West is insistently and exclusively a secularising influence, then much of the Islamic world will be somewhat distanced from it.

A deeply rooted sense of public integrity means more than integrity in government, important as that must be. Ethical lapses in medicine and education, malfeasance in business and banking, dishonesty among journalists, scientists, engineers, or scholars – all of these weaknesses can undermine the most promising democracies.

Let me finally emphasize my strong conviction that public integrity cannot grow out of authoritarian pronouncements. It must be rooted in the human heart and conscience. As the Holy Quran says: “There is no compulsion in religion”. The resurgence of spirituality – potentially such a positive force – can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness and imposes itself on others. Like all of the world’s great religions, Islam warns against the danger of comparing oneself with God, and places primary emphasis on the qualities of generosity, mercy and humility.

A central element in any religious outlook, it seems to me, is a sense of human limitation, a recognition of our own creature-hood – a posture of profound humility before the Divine. In that sensibility lies our best protection against divisive dogmatism and our best hope for creative pluralism.

In conclusion, then, I would ask – as you move out from this University into a diverse and demanding world – that you think about four considerations for renewing the promise of democracy: defining democratic paths more flexibly; expanding the role of civil society; increasing public capacities for self-governance; and strengthening our commitment to public integrity.

In all these ways, I believe we can help restore confidence in the promise of democratic life, affirming with pride our distinct cultural identities, while embracing with enthusiasm our new global potentials.

To the graduants, my prayer is that God may guide you and accompany you as you fulfil your destinies.

Thank You.

## **Inauguration of the French Medical Institute for Children Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan - 8 April 2006**

Mr. President,  
Madame Chirac,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted and touched that Madame Chirac has joined us today for the inauguration of the French Medical Institute for Children in the presence of His Excellency President Hamid Karzai. Despite a very heavy schedule, President Karzai has chosen to be with us today, which underlines his personal unwavering commitment and that of his Government to the reconstruction of this proud land of the great Afghan people. The partnership of the Government of Afghanistan will remain essential for the future of this Institute.

The presence of the First Lady of France is far from being simply symbolic because Mme Chirac is actively involved in the medical and social field, in particular as President, since 1994, of the Foundation of Paris Hospitals and French Hospitals. All of us here appreciate her engagement and her strong support of this medical initiative in Kabul. Moreover, the new Institute we are inaugurating today represents French medicine in Afghanistan, medicine which is of worldwide renown. In the future, this Institute will permanently represent the engagement of French medicine in the national medical services of Afghanistan.

We are here today thanks to the generosity of large French enterprises, and of French men and women who have understood the critical situation of medical care in Afghanistan after 25 years of war, and who wish to urgently try to re-establish medical institutions capable of serving the population who no longer have access to satisfactory medical treatment.

I also welcome the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy who, while leading French international affairs, is himself a medical doctor, ex-Head of Department at the Regional Hospital of Toulouse, and therefore extremely well qualified in the medical field.

I acknowledge the presence of Dr. Abdullah, the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs whose Ministry has been instrumental in negotiating the agreement for this partnership.

Indeed, I should especially emphasise the significance of this Institute in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. This Institute was created through a Public-Private Partnership to establish a new medical institute through a strategic collaboration: The support of the French Government, that of the Afghan Government, the participation of the French Non-Governmental Organisations La Chaîne de l'Espoir, and Afghan Children, and the Aga Khan University. This collaboration is today unique in Afghanistan and will bring to the Afghan population a new high quality hospital that will be accessible to the underprivileged.

I particularly wish to congratulate also the two French philanthropic associations La Chaîne de l'Espoir and Enfant Afghans whose President and Founder Prof. Alain Deloche, and President Dr. Eric Cheysson, of Enfants Afghans, are with us here today. I warmly congratulate them as well as the members of their team. Without them, this Institute would not exist.

The health condition of Afghan children is extremely poor. Neo-natal and infant mortality are among the highest in the world: one child in four does not reach the age of five years.

Out of one million children born each year in Afghanistan, 165,000 die within the first 30 days. Nineteen out of 20 births are outside a medical establishment. Out of one million future mothers, 17,000 will die of complications linked to their pregnancy. In Western countries this figure is 100, even less, for the same million births.

This infinitely serious situation justifies in itself the support of the Aga Khan University and the Aga Khan Health Services, but three additional reasons have prompted our engagement in the future management of this institution.

The first is that the Non-Governmental Organisations and the French and foreign enterprises who have contributed to the creation of this project have done so in a particularly sophisticated manner, bringing to Afghanistan, an institution and buildings comprising a very elaborate complex whose components were conceived with a vision of the future clearly in mind. Therefore, for example, the plans of the hospital have been established in a manner which allows for development and expansion, and of course the buildings are constructed according to anti-seismic norms.

The second reason is that France has engaged to continue its support by making available the necessary human resources to assure the provision of high quality medical treatment.

Finally, the third reason is that the Aga Khan Health Services have, at the regional level, a significant hospital network comprising the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi; a hospital in Bombay in India; our engagement in the hospital in Khorog in the East of Tajikistan; and the management of the hospital in Bamyan. In fact, it was logical that our desire to help in the reconstruction of Afghanistan qualifies us to manage the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul, known earlier as the Mother and Child Hospital.

Allow me to close on a vision of the future for this Institute, a vision which I know is already shared by the Afghan Government and the French Government, the French philanthropic associations La Chaîne de l'Espoir and Enfants Afghans, the Aga Khan University and the Aga Khan Health Services.

We are all convinced that Afghanistan today and for a number of years to come has a great need of men and women qualified in the medical and para-medical domain. The lack of human resources is in fact dramatic, because there is, according to the World Bank statistics of 2004, only one doctor for 5000 inhabitants. In comparison, France has 15.

As a result, it is clear that we must envisage training for nurses and doctors within this Institute. There too, we will engage in strategic reflection with the Afghan Government and the French medical institutions in order to conceive and put in place these training programmes, so critical for the future.

We therefore are highly desirous that this hospital develops into a high level university hospital tertiary care centre which will offer new specialisations – essential for Afghanistan – such as neuroscience, cardiology, oncology and many other fields of medicine, which best meet the needs of the country.

Thank you.

**Speech by the Aga Khan at the Royal Toledo Foundation Award Ceremony,  
Toledo, Spain, 2 March 2006**

Bismillahi Rahmanir Rahim

Your Majesty,

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Foundation Board,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of all the award recipients, including the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, it is my privilege to thank the Royal Toledo Foundation for its generosity in recognizing their efforts as contributing to the preservation of historic, cultural and artistic heritage.

We are particularly honoured by the presence of Your Majesty among us this evening. Some may ask if preserving the material evidence of our past influences the future positively, helps us live together in peace, and improve the quality of life.

I believe the answer is a confident yes. But there is a paradox.

In the developing, including the Muslim, world, many historic cities are home to large populations who live in extreme poverty. They may contain some of the greatest treasures of Muslim architecture, yet many of their inhabitants lack even the most basic services. They live on the margins of society and feel trapped in a cycle of poverty.

The risk is that when hope fades, extremist ideologies feed on the despair that is born from limitless poverty. Thus, a recent UN Development Programme study in Latin America reports that a majority of people surveyed would support authoritarian rule if it delivered economic progress.

This confirms a universal tendency. Whatever their faiths or value systems, the primary, daily concern of peoples everywhere is their quality of life.

Indeed, the revelation of Islam - my faith - looks upon freedom from hunger, provision of appropriate shelter and clothing, security against fear for one's safety, good health, learning and wisdom, and generation of wealth as a blessing to strive for, and to share in the creation of an equitable order of peace and harmony.

This explains my own role, as the hereditary Imam - the spiritual leader - of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, in development activities through the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, or the AKDN.

Like the Muslim Ummah as a whole, the worldwide Ismaili community that I lead is immensely pluralistic, culturally and linguistically. In our experience and conviction, the creation of a humane, socially supportive built environment is critical to people's quality of life.

For this reason, the Historic Cities Support Programme, a component of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, is not only concerned with saving buildings or historic districts for future generations. It seeks to go beyond restoration to creating mechanisms that contribute to real, measurable improvement in the quality of life in rural and urban areas, also enabling their inhabitants thereby to look after their cultural assets.

This is the goal of the multi-programme capacity-building strategies which the AKDN deploys to help the residents of historic cities or areas, whether this be the Silk Road, or Kabul and Herat in Afghanistan, Aleppo in Syria, Mopti in Mali, Zanzibar, or Cairo, the city that my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded more than a thousand years ago. In all such places, rehabilitation of cultural heritage is supported by the work of AKDN agencies specialising in microfinance, health, education, water and sanitation and promotion of economic enterprise.

We have evidence to believe that the processes we have been developing and testing for the past 20 years have the potential to become self-sustainable. The expertise and investment that they bring to historic cities, or indeed the Silk Road, are helping to create jobs and economic opportunities, for example, through tourism and by rendering ancient crafts and skills into marketable products and services.

At the same time, I believe conservation can play a central role in helping different civilizations understand each other, to appreciate how mutually enriching their historic interactions have been, and the contribution of each to the common heritage of humanity.

Undeniably, there have been periods in history when the genius of different civilisations was perceived as a threat. In recent times also, we have witnessed attempts by antagonistic social, cultural and religious forces to impose their own norms on vulnerable groups.

Be that as it may, the reality is that our world is pluralistic and multi-cultural, and destined to remain so.

Ought we not, then, to focus our attention on periods of history when pluralism was happily embraced? May we not learn thereby the need to nurture what I have recently called a cosmopolitan ethic? For this is the foundation of a merit-based civil society capable of harnessing the best in all walks of life from all groups of people. This is the only way to manage, and build on, pluralism, the critical test of democracy anywhere.

This brings me to Toledo which has so successfully preserved, over many centuries, the evidence of its three-fold culture: magnificent churches, synagogues and mosques.

This was an era when each of these cultures, Christian, Jewish and Muslim, retained its independent identity while all worked and came together in a glorious intellectual and spiritual adventure. The legacy was a truly enabling environment conducive to prosperity, harmony, scientific discovery, philosophical insights and artistic flowering - all the defining features of a thriving civilisation.

I believe, therefore, that the past has the potential to inspire the future positively, and in the wisdom of investing in its protection, particularly the protection of cultures under threat.

The Royal Toledo Foundation deserves admiration for its commitment to keeping alive this spirit of Toledo.

Thank you.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at Evora University Symposium:  
“Cosmopolitan Society, Human Safety and Rights in Plural and Peaceful  
Societies” - 12 February 2006**

President Sampaio,  
Rector Manuel Patricio,  
Professor Adriano Moreira,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour to be invited here today to address this esteemed audience on such a relevant topic. Our title speaks of societies which are at once plural and peaceful—a goal which is important but also elusive. For even our best efforts to combine stability with modernity seem to be constantly disrupted.

Some of these disruptions come from new technologies—from internet blogs to biogenetics. Others spring from nature—from changing weather patterns or mutating viruses. Still others arise from social transformations—new patterns of family life, --and enormous migrations of people.

Newspaper headlines remind us daily of growing strains and stresses: Civil disorder in places as affluent as France and Australia; the plight of hurricane victims in Louisiana and earthquake victims in Kashmir; the uses of nuclear energy; the sense of impotence amid suffering in places like Darfur.

The planet becomes more crowded and its resources less abundant. The gap widens between rich and poor. People everywhere cry out against these evils. But change, when it comes at all, is painfully slow, and we sometimes seem to be sliding backward.

I should also mention here the headlines of this past week—which chart the widening gulf between Islamic and Western societies. Here the culprit has not been military action or diplomatic failure but the power of media images----deeply offensive caricatures -- which have profoundly offended one billion four hundred million Muslims around the world— including myself.

The question I ask—as I read all these headlines—is this: Why are political and civil leaders, in rich and poor nations alike, unable to develop the vision and harness the will to confront such challenges more effectively?

What makes this sense of impasse especially disturbing is that it so often represents a failure of democracy. For many centuries, it was the conviction of enlightened people that societies would truly come to grips with their problems once they became democratic. The great barrier to progress, they said, was that governments listened to the special few— rather than the voice of the many. If we could only advance the march of democracy, they argued, then a progressive agenda would inevitably fall into place.

But I am not sure that such an analysis holds up any longer. For the past half century, we have seen great waves of ostensibly democratic reform—from the fading of colonialism in mid-century to the fall of the Iron Curtain. But despite this apparent progress, the results have often been disappointing.

I can scarcely count, nor fully catalog, the variety of governments which I have visited over the past five decades—from the most autocratic to the most participatory. Often, the more democratic governments were the more effective and responsible. But this was not consistently true—and I have recently found it to be decreasingly true. In fact, nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorized as “failed democracies.”

Democracy and progress do not always go hand in hand—and the growing threat of “Failed States” can often be described as “the Failure of Democracy.”

Frequently, democratic failures grow out of sheer incompetence. Publics are asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. Candidates obscure their own views and distort their opponents' positions. Journalists transmit superficial rhetoric and slight underlying realities. People are appointed to jobs they cannot do—but are rarely held accountable.

Corruption for some becomes a way of life. Meanwhile, the Media tell audiences what they want to know rather than what they ought to know. And what too many people want today is not to be informed-- but to be entertained.

The breakdowns are institutional as well as personal. Democratic systems veer between too many checks and balances-- and too few. Parliaments, in particular, often lack the expertise and structure to grapple with complex problems—and they are often too factionalized or too subservient to sustain a coherent view.

For all these reasons, democracies often make bad decisions. And when democracies are ineffective, disenchanted publics are tempted in other directions.

Latin America is one place where democracy was thought to be expanding in recent years. Yet the UN Development Program reports that 55 percent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress.

The challenge of democratic competence, then, is a central problem of our time. Meeting that challenge must be one of our central callings.

The challenge of democratic renewal has been vastly compounded by another development which is also mentioned in the title of this symposium. I refer to the rapid proliferation of cosmopolitan populations. The world is becoming more pluralist in fact—but it is not keeping pace in spirit. "Cosmopolitan" social patterns have not yet been matched by what I would call "a cosmopolitan ethic."

Peoples mix and mingle, side by side, to an extent that was once unimaginable. Waves of migration indelibly change the rhythms, colours and flavours of their host communities.

Some 150 million legal immigrants live outside their country of birth, joined by uncounted millions who have immigrated illegally.

These trends will continue. Globalization has dissolved the tight bond between community and geography. Economic opportunity—for rich and poor alike—can lie in distant lands. Some 45 million young people enter the job market in the developing world each year--but there are not enough jobs at home for all of them. Meanwhile war and civil conflict add their refugees to the mix.

Immigration brings both blessings and problems. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 member countries of the OECD, where an aging workforce requires new young workers. Meanwhile, remittances sent home by immigrants total some \$145 billion a year—and generate nearly \$300 billion in economic activity— more than is provided either by Foreign Development Aid or Foreign Direct Investment.

At the same time, immigrant communities can sharply strain public and private resources. The resulting competition with older residents can cause resentment and hostility. More than half of the respondents in various European opinion polls have a negative view of immigration. The so-called "Clash of Civilizations" is both a local and a global danger.

But it need not be this way. Nor has it always been this way down through the sweep of history. Yes-- cultural clash has been one major theme in the human story. But so has inter-cultural cooperation.

This country and this university know from your own history how Islamic and Christian cultures met in this part of the world many centuries ago—and how enriching their interactions



were for both traditions. This is a good time and place to emphasize the manifold blessings that come when peoples decide to stop shouting at one another, and instead begin listening and learning.

Cross cultural interaction has been a central focus of my own activities in the nearly 50 years since I became Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. The ethics of Islam bridge faith and society, so my responsibilities as spiritual leader are accompanied by a strong engagement in issues of community well being.

The Ismailis are themselves a culturally-diverse community. They live -- as minorities -- in more than twenty-five countries, primarily in the developing world, but also in Europe -- including Portugal -- and North America. This Ismaili multi-cultural experience is reflected in the approach of the Aga Khan Development Network —working with a wide array of partners to help the disadvantaged, regardless of their origin. We are pleased, for example, that our work in Portugal has recently been formalized in cooperative agreements with both the Portuguese Government and the Patriarchate of Lisbon.

In discussing cultural diversity, let me also mention our recent partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. This Centre will draw on both Ismaili experience and the experience of Canada itself, where a pluralist society thrives—and where—in contrast to much of world opinion, 80 per cent of the public welcomes immigration as a positive development. In honoring me today, you honor the tradition which I represent, and, in doing so, you are renewing an inspiring story of intercultural affection and intercultural respect, of mutual dependence and mutual reinforcement.

This brings me to my central question. What is it we can now do to nurture healthy and competent democracies, in old settings where democracy has grown weary and in new settings where it is freshly planted? I would make three suggestions—each of which is reflected in the experience of this university.

First, we must strengthen our civil institutions. This means realizing that a democratic society requires much more than democratic politics. Governments alone do not make democracy work. Private initiative is also essential, including a vital role for those institutions which are collectively described as “civil society.”

By civil society I mean an array of institutions which operate on a private, voluntary basis — but which are driven by public motivations. They include institutions dedicated to education, to culture, to science and research. They include commercial, labor, professional and ethnic associations, as well as entities devoted to maintaining health, protecting the environment, and curing disease. Religious institutions are central to civil society—and so are institutions of the media.

Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government and politics, we neglect the importance of civil institutions. I am not suggesting we ignore politics—but I am suggesting that we think beyond our political preoccupations. A thriving civil sector is essential in renewing the promise of democracy.

The second democratic pillar I would mention is education—rigorous, responsible and relevant education. We must do a better job of training leaders and shaping institutions to meet more demanding tests of competence and higher standards of excellence. This means moving beyond the notion that better education simply means broader schooling — wider access to formal learning. We must accompany our concern for quantity with a heightened concern for quality. Are the curricula we teach relevant to the knotty problems of the future? Or are we still providing a twentieth century education for twenty-first century leaders?

Our system of Aga Khan Universities and Aga Khan Academies are addressing such questions as they work to advance the concept of meritocracy in the developing world and to maintain world class standards which will stretch our students rather than patronizing them.

For too long some of our schools have taught too many subjects as subsets of dogmatic commitments. Economic insights, for example, were treated as ideological choices—rather than as exercises in scientific problem solving. Too often, education made our students less flexible—confident to the point of arrogance that they now had all the answers—rather than more flexible—humble in their life-long openness to new questions and new responses.

An important goal of quality education is to equip each generation to participate effectively in what has been called "the great conversation" of our times. This means, on one hand, being unafraid of controversy. But it also means being sensitive to the values and outlooks of others.

This brings me back to the current headlines. For I must believe that it is ignorance which explains the publishing of those caricatures which have brought such pain to Islamic peoples. I note that the Danish journal where the controversy originated acknowledged, in a recent letter of apology, that it had never realized the sensitivities involved.

In this light, perhaps, the controversy can be described less as a clash of civilizations and more as a clash of ignorance. The alternative explanation would be that the offense was intended—in which case we would be confronted with evil of a different sort. But even to attribute the problem to ignorance is in no way to minimize its importance. In a pluralistic world, the consequences of ignorance can be profoundly damaging.

Perhaps, too, it is ignorance which has allowed so many participants in this discussion to confuse liberty with license—implying that the sheer absence of restraint on human impulse can constitute a sufficient moral framework. This is not to say that governments should censor offensive speech. Nor does the answer lie in violent words or violent actions. But I am suggesting that freedom of expression is an incomplete value unless it is used honorably, and that the obligations of citizenship in any society should include a commitment to informed and responsible expression.

If we can commit ourselves, on all sides, to that objective, then the current crisis could become an educational opportunity—an occasion for enhanced awareness and broadened perspectives.

Ignorance, arrogance, insensitivity—these attitudes rank high among the great public enemies of our time. And the educational enterprise, at its best, can be an effective antidote to all of them.

Let me move, then, to my third suggestion for strengthening democracy in a pluralistic world—the renewal of ethical commitment.

Democratic processes are presumably about the sharing of power, broadening the number who help shape social decisions. But that sharing--in and of itself-- means little apart from the purposes for which power is finally used.

To speak of end purposes, in turn, is to enter the realm of ethics. What are our ultimate goals? Whose interests do we seek to serve? How, in an increasingly cynical time, can we inspire people to a new set of aspirations—reaching beyond rampant materialism, the new relativism, self-serving individualism, and resurgent tribalism.

The search for justice and security, the struggle for equality of opportunity, the quest for tolerance and harmony, the pursuit of human dignity—these are moral imperatives which we must work and think about on a daily basis.

In the ethical realm—as in the educational realm—one of the great stumbling blocks is arrogance. Even the resurgence of religious feeling—which should be such a positive force--can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness. All of the world's great religions warn against this excess—yet in the name of those same religions too many are tempted to play God themselves—rather than recognising their humility before the Divine.

A central element in a truly religious outlook, it seems to me, is the quality of personal humility—a recognition that strive as we might, we will still fall short of our ideals, that climb as we might, there will still be unexplored and mysterious peaks above us. It means recognizing our own creaturehood—and thus our human limitations. In that recognition, it seems to me, lies our best protection against false prophecies and divisive dogmatism.

A deepening sense of spiritual commitment—and the ethical framework that goes with it—will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quick sands of modern life. A strengthening of religious institutions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion—then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape—with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction.

What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook.

In conclusion, then, I would ask you think with me about these three requirements: a new emphasis on civil institutions, a more rigorous concern for educational excellence, and a renewed commitment to ethical standards. For these are all ways in which we can encourage a climate of positive pluralism in our world—and thus help meet the current crisis of democracy.

For only in such a climate will we come to see our differences as sources of enrichment rather than sources of division. And only in such a climate can we come to see “the other” not as a curse or a threat, but as an opportunity and a blessing-- whether “the other” lives across the street-- or across the world.

**Acceptance Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan  
University of Evora Honorary Doctorate - 12 February 2006**

President Sampaio  
Minister of State & Foreign Affairs Freitas do Amaral  
Rector Manuel Patricio  
Professor Adriano Moreira  
Members of the University Senate, Scientific Board and Faculty  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply touched by your warm welcome and generous remarks. I accept this honour with the utmost gratitude and humility, conscious of the great distinction and achievements of past recipients.

Today's occasion is of special happiness since it continues the long-standing relationship that the Ismaili Imamat and community enjoy with the Republic and people of Portugal. Our ties are the stronger for being rooted in a shared sense of responsibility to strive together for the greater good of all.

The University of Evora is an ancient bastion of this sense of equitable and moral order which supports its tradition of academic excellence, nurturing merit wherever it exists.

These are the values which the Iberian Peninsula radiated as an inspiring beacon of light, representing the truly glorious epochs in human history when the Muslim and Judeo-Christian worlds developed constructive linkages, enriching their civilisations and empowering their institutions of higher learning with new sources of knowledge.

It is a privilege to be associated with a University which has remained true for so many centuries to the principle that the fruits of learning are to be at the service of all humanity.

In Islam, this is a core principle of belief. In that tradition, my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, who founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo a thousand years ago, viewed the acquisition of knowledge as a means to understanding, so as to serve better, God's creation.

For them the true purpose of scholarship, and the gift of reason was to help build society and guide human aspirations. Lest it be forgotten, the society of their times was richly pluralistic when the Quranic notion of the Ahl al-Kitab – the People of the Book – and of one humanity were the driving force for tolerance and respect for difference.

One of history's great lessons is that a society can underwrite human progress only when it overcomes its insularity and suspicion of "the other," and instead, looks upon difference as a source of strength. For, while our new century continues to be marred by conflict and tension, the effective world of tomorrow is a pluralist one which comprehends, welcomes and builds on diversity.

That is why I passionately view the struggle against poverty, and respect for the values of pluralism, as two of the most significant tests of whether the 21st Century is to be an era of global peace, stability and progress. These two challenges engage the entire spectrum of the institutions and programmes of the Ismaili Imamat which constitute the Aga Khan Development Network, cornerstones of which are its educational endeavours from the pre-school to the tertiary level. The Network's agencies and programmes are non-denominational and open to all without discrimination, guided by the Imamat's policy of replacing walls that divide with bridges which unite.

Their ethic is that of global convergence and the development of civil society that manages, and harnesses the forces of pluralism so as to elicit the best in human endeavour. I am profoundly honoured that this historic institution of higher learning, that has contributed so

much to the human cause, has seen fit to consider me henceforth as one of its esteemed graduates.

Thank you.

**Statement by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Conference on Afghanistan,  
London, 31st January 2006**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

In spite of remarkable progress in Afghanistan since the Bonn Agreement of 2001, daunting challenges remain and the new Compact sets ambitious goals for addressing them.

The Compact is a recognition by the international community that returning Afghanistan to its proud status as a happy and prosperous country, able to contribute to the progress of the region and to desirable global goals, requires the steadfast commitment of our collective will and resources for the long term.

The Compact acknowledges that this rebuilding must be on a solid foundation of fundamental respect for the rich pluralistic heritage, values and peoples of Afghanistan.

I am pleased that the Compact also stresses the valuable role of civil society institutions in the monumental task that lies before us. The Aga Khan Development Network remains dedicated to this mission, operating in an integrated fashion across the broad spectrum of human development: economic, social and cultural. We are investing in sustainable enterprises, building capacity in social services, and restoring monuments and buildings such as Bagh-e-Babur that are part of Afghanistan's pluralist history and culture.

Our financial pledge of \$75 million in 2002 has been exceeded by 60 per cent and along with our donor, lender and investor partners, we have mobilised just under \$400 million for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Our experience in Afghanistan, as well as in neighbouring Tajikistan and Pakistan, is that sustainable development is only possible when the community is engaged at the grassroots level and is given the ways and the means to take responsibility for its own future.

This means building the capacity of civil society institutions as well as tapping into the wellspring of individual initiative that has been part of the vigorous Afghan spirit for centuries.

It is therefore critical that the Government of Afghanistan creates the appropriate legal and fiscal framework, the regulatory conditions and the stable democratic institutions – in other words, the enabling environment – that encourages and supports the confidence and growth of private initiative, and also facilitates the development of public-private partnerships.

Because of the extensive presence of AKDN agencies in Afghanistan -- engaged in humanitarian assistance, education, health, rural and urban development, microfinance, tourism, cultural revitalization, telecommunications and banking -- we have a wide understanding of the redevelopment processes in Afghanistan.

We are thus proposing to work with the Government of Afghanistan, in concert with a wide variety of stakeholders, to support the development and maintenance of an enabling environment. I would like to take this opportunity today to invite our partners – including governments, international and non-governmental organisations, and investors – to work with us and to participate in a conference we are planning in Kabul within the next twelve months to address this critical issue. The task that lies before us is enormous and governments cannot shoulder the burden alone. It is my firm belief that if the enabling conditions are in place, private initiative and the organisations of civil society can work successfully, with governments, toward achievement of our common vision for Afghanistan.

Thank you.

**Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Signing Ceremony of the Protocol of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Portugal and the Ismaili Imamat - Lisbon, 19 December 2005**

President Sampaio  
Prime Minister Socrates  
Minister of State and Foreign Affairs Freitas do Amaral  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply touched by the generosity of remarks by Prime Minister Socrates. I also thank President Sampaio, the Prime Minister, and the Government of the Portuguese Republic, for their kindness and warm welcome.

In its contemporary history, when our world, at times, has seemed to descend into chaos, and moral leadership into oblivion, Portugal has been an outstanding example of integrity

and compassion. When crises have erupted beyond her shores, she has welcomed displaced populations of different cultures and ethnicities. This is, therefore, an appropriate occasion to acknowledge the lasting gratitude and permanent commitment of the Ismaili Imamat and Community to Portugal, a land of harmony and opportunity, that rejoices in her diversity as a wellspring of national strength.

It is a great honour and an immense source of happiness for me to be at this historic Palace of Ajuda to mark a milestone, as our valued relationship moves confidently forward. The Protocol of Co-operation between the Government of the Portuguese Republic and the Ismaili Imamat, which we signed this evening, is the first such Agreement that the Ismaili Imamat has signed with a Western Government, and I am deeply convinced that it will bring clear benefits to our peoples and to many others.

For the Ismaili Imamat, the Ismaili Community worldwide and me, this is a highly important day. I, therefore, wish this evening, to illustrate the full significance which it has in our eyes, and which is the context in which His Excellency Professor Freitas do Amaral, the Foreign Minister, and I spent some exceptional time together in putting our final touches to this Agreement.

Portugal is a small country, with a long history, and its role in the world has been illuminated by peaks of glory. The Ismaili Community is a small community with a long history also illuminated by peaks of glory. Our respective histories have also, at times, been marked by conflict and internal challenges. They have often strengthened us. Portugal's population is only slightly smaller than that of the Ismaili Community worldwide today. We have, therefore, very much in common, which underscores the logic of our new and formal relationship. But there are also differences.

Portugal is rooted in the centuries old Christian world, whereas the Ismaili Imamat is rooted in the centuries old Muslim world. Portugal's influence has been essentially in Africa and South America, with an occasional presence in Asia. The Ismaili Community is significantly present in Central and South Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, but it is nearly totally absent from South America.

What brings us together is not only our historical similarities and our mutual respect for our past, but our wish to work together better to address the opportunities and the problems which will confront us in the decades ahead. Our respective histories have taught us to place our trust in human values and to root them in an ethical view of life. Our histories have taught us the value of dialogue, and that rarely, indeed very rarely, does anything good come out of conflict. Our world view is to engage with the problem of social exclusion in our societies and to contribute to building bridges across faiths and across nations, by linking diverse parts of the world.

I have no doubt that for you, whose historical roots are in the Christian world, it is as painful as it is for us Muslims, with our roots in the East, to watch an increasingly deep gulf growing between significant parts of our respective worlds. We cannot stand by as passive observers letting this gulf grow wider and wider, at the cost of future generations. If we have the will, which I am certain we share, we have the historical knowledge and the ethical foundations to move our world forward, to make it a better and more hopeful place, and to put an end to the storm of hatred which appears to be building up around us.

We are concerned, and most rightly so, that there is poverty among our respective peoples, and we cannot stand by watching this inhuman indignity become a permanent part of our societies, of our generations of today and tomorrow. We must work together to develop an arsenal of peaceful weapons to attack this plight which blights our times, and to try to make sure that those who are marginalised today can be certain that we are not blind to them, that we will not let their future generations live in the same hopeless world in which they themselves are seeking, often only in despair, to survive.

In confronting this situation we share the same need to build our civil societies for we both recognise that it is the civil society institutions of today, that, strengthened and expanded by tomorrow, have the highest probability of enabling people to help themselves out of the quagmire of poverty. Working together in the East and the West, we certainly have the greatest chance of being successful in multiple situations, such as responding to the needs of aging populations.

There are those who say that faiths divide. This may be true. But today we must explore every opportunity to have different faiths come together in addressing the problems of our respective societies. We come from the same common religious heritage, descendants of Abraham, and it is enjoined on us to address the problems of society on the same ethical premises.

You have created here in Portugal a moral and enabling environment for faiths to live in equity and mutual respect. I intend to do all in my power to work with other faiths here and elsewhere, to give practical meaning and quantifiable outcomes to our future partnerships.

The acute challenge for all faiths, both in terms of their principles and practice, is the scourge of poverty which, unfortunately, also afflicts sections of populations, especially minorities, even in the industrially advanced countries of the West. The tragedies they endure and the unknown dimensions of their plight have been highlighted by recent natural and other events. To their credit, their citizens and governments recognize it is intolerable that these pockets of misery should persist in self respecting societies.

It is in this light that, encouraged by the Government, and after careful assessments through years of independently commissioned studies and programmatic engagement, particularly in Early Childhood Education development, the Aga Khan Development Network has embarked on an Urban Community Support Programme in Portugal. This is designed to help marginalised groups, including cultural and ethnic minorities living in urban settings, develop their own capacity to move out of the poverty trap and achieve the benefits of social inclusion.

The Government and municipalities, the European Commission, leading civil society and business organisations are our partners in this moral enterprise known by its local name of *Kapacidad*, reflecting the conviction that people are inherently capable to look after themselves. I am most happy to acknowledge and welcome the presence here this evening of their representatives.

In global terms our numbers may be small, but our openness to addressing the issues of our time and of tomorrow, our willingness to bring mature judgment to our pluralist societies, are so strong, and so vigorously shared, that I believe the partnership we are founding today would enable us, with God's support, to have a positive influence in the future which could far surpass the sizes of our demographics.

These are the reasons that have given birth to my conviction that this is truly an historic day.



These are the principles that underpin our long standing and fruitful relationship, inspiring the joint work we already do in Portugal and abroad in Mozambique, Afghanistan and ... Pakistan. It is on these principles and experience that the Protocol of Co-operation builds. Both the Government and the Imamat are determined it does not remain just an expression of pious hope.

Thank you.

**Address by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the Convocation of the Aga Khan University  
Saturday, 3 December 2005**

Your Excellency  
Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz  
Your Excellency Governor Ishrat-ul-Ebad Honourable  
Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Chairman Dehlavi and the Members of the Board of Trustees  
President Kassim-Lakha  
Graduates and Parents  
Generous donors and well wishers of the University, from Pakistan and around the world  
Distinguished guests

The presence here this morning of Your Excellency the Prime Minister, for which I thank you most deeply, is a visible tribute to this nation's resilience and determination not to be overcome by a tragedy of vast proportions. Scarcely two months ago in Kashmir and the North West Frontier Province, tens of thousands of our brothers, sisters and their children lost their lives, communities were split apart and local economies were shattered by the forces of nature. The Ummah and the world at large grieve with Pakistan. We pray for the eternal peace of those who died; for the relief and comfort of the grievously injured; and for the consolation and courage of their families. Ultimately, our refuge must be in the promise of the all-encompassing mercy of our Lord Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful. Despondency, therefore, is a betrayal of our faith. The future must be faced and rebuilt on a sounder basis.

Despite these sad circumstances it is a great pleasure to be here to rejoice with parents and friends in the steadfastness and the achievements of our new graduates. We rejoice not only because you have become promising nurses, physicians, educators and researchers, but because at AKU you have also become educated men and women with expanded powers of reason and reflection. As you now prepare to leave your University years, I congratulate you and I wish for you the blessings and deep satisfactions that can come from using all your powers in service to the progress of mankind. Your gifts, your hard work and the devotion of your professors have prepared you well. You are eagerly awaited by us and by a world of grave and sudden needs.

The earthquake has brutally reminded this University of the reason for its existence. World communications beam instantly around the globe the image of death and misery—of earthquakes, tsunami, plague, and of man-made disasters of violence and hatred. For a time, they capture the world's attention and generosity. Governments, themselves overwhelmed, do their best and carry most of the burden of the basic recovery. But they and the world's donors must very often look to existing, specialized, non-governmental organizations that have the knowledge, professional manpower and experience to respond to the great array of ills that follow social trauma.

In what way has the Aga Khan University contributed to facing this national tragedy and how should its happening affect future education at AKU?

First, the most enduring work done by many of the AKU response teams, notably in the realm of public health, has been to create model health programs and health surveillance systems on the ground and train the people to run them. These systems had for years been studied and tested and training programs were developed by the Aga Khan Health Service and by AKU's Department of Community Health Science. Our hope is that the disaster will eventually leave, at least in some respects, stronger communities.

Second, the effectiveness of AKU's response to this highly complex human disaster was materially increased because the University is part of the Aga Khan Development Network. The Aga Khan Health Service had for several decades been studying and working with

mountain people and villages; the Aga Khan Building and Planning Service was able to share its methodology for constructing temporary shelter and seismic-resistant construction; and the Aga Khan Foundation helicopters provided the transportation of materials and evacuation of serious casualties.

We may take pride in all of this, but the fact is that AKU does not teach about architecture and land planning, nor environmental studies such as climatology, nor engineering and seismology, nor habitat change, nor the means to convey such knowledge to civil societies, as is so evidently needed for the rebuilding of Kashmir.

The tragedy of the earthquake raises in quite clear terms a central question for AKU and other universities in Pakistan: What should be the next areas of education to which AKU should devote itself, and is higher education in this country preparing future generations for Pakistan's needs? Shamsh Kassim-Lakha has shared with you some of AKU's plans for the future. The Trustees and I are also considering areas such as architecture and the built environment, including land planning, as well as governance and civil society, and fortunately these would appear to be some of the areas of knowledge that would be required in order to face, better, a further major earthquake. Sadly, AKU does not yet offer education in these fields but it does seem that another tragedy of such a nature would require a response from men and women educated in such areas, which have been pre-selected in the University's forward academic planning.

Today's University is the work of many hands and generous spirits. But the substance and quality of today's AKU owes a very great deal to the determination, energies and loyalty of its first president. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha has led AKU - Pakistan's first, fully fledged private university - through its construction, the promulgation of its Charter, the establishment of its Medical Center and the outreach of its programs.

Universities have long periods of development and change, as the President has often noted, and I know that he has thought for some time that AKU was nearing the point at which the baton should be passed to a leader who would carry it to its next plateau. I have agreed, with the understanding that the change should occur only when a person of the highest personal, intellectual and professional qualities could be found.

I am happy to be able to say that I have recently proposed to the Board of Trustees the name of Mr Firoz Rasul. Mr Rasul has demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities for which he has received national recognition and respect within Canada. He has been one of Canada's most successful entrepreneurs and has served as a member of the Board of Governors of the University of British Columbia. His wife Saida was recently appointed Chairman of the Board of Governors of Simon Fraser University. He has also overseen major projects for me in Canada: the development of the Global Centre for Pluralism and the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam building in Ottawa; and the Aga Khan Museum and the Ismaili Centre in Toronto.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Firoz Rasul, the next president of AKU; and to give my warmest and my deepest thanks to Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, who has brought the University to its present level of distinction.

The University now stands at a new threshold of needs, aspiration and potential, but I believe its course is clearer, and secure, as it approaches its leadership transition.

Much of my confidence rests with the support AKU has received, without fail, from the Government of Pakistan and of the Provincial Government of Sindh, and of the enormous generosity of thousands of donors here and abroad. To them, I express my deep, deep gratitude.

AKU's leadership is changing at a time when, beyond national boundaries, it is in the field of education that reflection is most desperately needed. Many countries, nations at widely diverse stages of economic and social development, are expressing grave doubts about the effectiveness of their systems of education to develop the intellectual and moral talent they need to function in the modern world—and to engage all levels of their societies.

This vital work in education must be highly sensitive to local conditions, gain the confidence of parents and children and communities and draw upon the best research into brain development, nutrition, and learning theory. But it must also grasp the role and the importance of local values, for educational change is also a deeply moral enterprise. It will only flourish as part of a revitalization of our societies.

A great risk to the modernization of the Islamic world is identity loss — the blind assumption that we should give up all our essential values and cultural expressions to those of other civilizations. In order to contain this risk, for it cannot be totally eliminated, we must reinvigorate our own value systems and cultural expressions. This includes the sciences and the ethical structures that go with them, but also architecture and the design of landscape and towns, literature, music, philosophical thought, and the free space they require, which are unfailing signs of a nation's vitality and confidence.

This is the frame within which AKU will function in the years ahead. It is also the world of yearning, hope and creative possibilities that our graduates will enter.

Thank You.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
at the Opening of the Kabul Serena Hotel  
8 November 2005**

President Karzai  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my immense happiness and privilege to welcome you all as we celebrate the inauguration of one of Kabul's restored landmarks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those professionals, architects, construction trades, staff and volunteers who have worked so hard, under so many constraints, to build this hotel and prepare it for today's opening.

The presence here of so many government leaders and so many other distinguished guests, marks this event as an important milestone in Afghanistan's reconstruction and its re-engagement with the world community.

Today's ceremony is also an occasion to pay tribute to President Karzai and his cabinet for their steadfast commitment to the task of rebuilding this country and helping its people regain their proud nationhood.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are some who will ask: why build an hotel in Afghanistan at this stage of its struggle for development? And why build one of a five star level?

In 2002, the Government of Afghanistan asked the Aga Khan Development Network – the AKDN - to help in restoring Kabul's hotel capacity, which had been almost totally destroyed by the civil war.

The government wanted to ensure that state visitors, diplomats, government officials, foreign and local investors, donor agency representatives and tourists travelling to Kabul would have acceptable accommodation. The Kabul Hotel had been a notable landmark and centre of activity in the city since it was built in 1945; hence it was an obvious candidate for restoration.

In post-conflict situations, countries must make choices in how to rebuild themselves. One way would be to accept the mediocre or run-of-the-mill and to be satisfied with what is second best. The other way is to see reconstruction as an opportunity to draw upon the world's state-of-the-art technologies and standards, using them to jump-start the economy and to help bring it to a new and higher plane. I cannot believe that replacing a collapsed society and environment with mediocrity is the right way for a destroyed country to rebuild for its future.

Certainly, Germany, Japan and South Korea, now among the leading economies of the world, have clearly demonstrated in the not-so-distant past that the second approach to post-conflict reconstruction is the one that has the most lasting impact. I believe that is the approach we, AKDN, must take in Afghanistan, just as we have done in other post-conflict situations where we have been engaged, such as Tajikistan, Uganda and Mozambique.

As a significant development asset, the Kabul Serena Hotel is a major commitment within the broader mission of the AKDN's nine development agencies which work in concert on the many facets of human development. Regardless of gender, origin or faith, the AKDN strives to help the weakest in society to achieve self reliance in improving their lives, guided by the Quranic ethic of a common humanity and the dignity of all mankind.

AKDN affiliate agencies began that mission in Afghanistan in 1995 with refugee resettlement and emergency humanitarian assistance. Since 2001, our agencies have been engaged in longer term development across the full spectrum of human need: economic, social and cultural.

AKDN takes an area-based approach. Drawing on its experience of many years in diverse environments, we have learned that development is an integrated process. This requires us to work simultaneously across multiple sectors, and in spheres both public and private.

Working in close partnership with the Government ensures that, together, we focus on national priorities and address critical issues. We believe that the principal issue is the need to build a vibrant civil society to help develop economic, social and cultural institutions to serve people in rural and urban settings. We have thus been cooperating with the Government in expanding a community development programme through the creation of village-based Community Development Councils, enabling us to direct attention to priorities that people themselves identify. A thousand of these institutions are expected to be functioning by next year.

It is heartening that a recent external evaluation, commissioned by the World Bank, found this AKDN approach innovative and effective in forming credible, legitimate and self-reliant institutions. The report commended the outcome as a significant contribution to democratic governance and civil society development in the country. This observation corresponds to our experience in many countries, similar to that of the United Nations, that a healthy civil society is indispensable to fostering and legitimizing pluralism which itself is the foundation of democratic government. This remains a paramount challenge.

In the health sector, we are training health and medical personnel, the priority being the training of midwives and nurses. The AKDN's nursing education programme has been endorsed by the Ministry as the national nursing education standard for Afghanistan. Besides many health clinics, the AKDN also manages the Bamiyan Hospital, the province's only referral centre, whose facilities have been considerably upgraded by us, and a new ward block opened earlier this year.

In education, the AKDN is engaged in the rehabilitation and construction of 132 schools, and is working on curriculum development, teacher education and training in the disciplines related to the management of schools and education programmes.

In the economic sphere, we are using microfinance to support rural development and small scale enterprises. The First Micro Finance Bank and the Rural Micro credit Programme set up by us have a combined loan portfolio of some US\$ 12 million, and operate in Kabul, Pul-e-Khumri, Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat. We expect their portfolio to triple by 2007 and their branch network is extending throughout the country. We are building productive infrastructure, including roads, bridges, mini-hydel and irrigation systems that are having a major impact on enhancing access and income opportunities in the areas where we operate.

We are also establishing enterprises, such as this hotel, that we believe are strategic to the national economy. These investments are managed by another AKDN development agency: The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development, or AKFED. AKFED is dedicated to building economically-sound enterprises in countries of Asia and Africa where foreign-direct investment and management know-how are in short supply, and where many private investors regard the risk as too great. The focus is not on profit, but on people. We seek ways to transfer knowledge and technical capacity to local citizens and to the national economy to generate an economic ripple effect.

This is the AKFED development agenda in the countries where we are active, from Afghanistan to Uganda, almost always at the invitation of the government concerned. All AKFED strategic investments are made in close consultation with the government, focusing on the key sectors of industry, infrastructure, media, financial services, air transport and the leisure industry.

Here in Afghanistan, AKFED has also helped build telecommunications infrastructure with the creation of Roshan, the brand name under which its Telephone Development Company operates. This too was a strategic investment in the light of the extensive damage that the sector had suffered during the hostilities. The Roshan network now serves 45 urban centres and about 100 small towns. Roshan has created more than 500 jobs, making it one of the

largest employers in the country. Indirect employment has been much greater, estimated at about 7000. Roshan has contributed in fees, duties and taxes more than \$ 50 million to the Government coffers. I believe the contribution that Roshan has made to the country's unity and productivity has been immeasurable.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I conclude please allow me to explain briefly why we attach importance to our work in the field of culture.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture has taken on several important projects, beginning with the restoration of historic gardens, the Bagh-e-Babur, the burial site of the founder of the Mughal Empire. We have also restored the Mausoleum of Timur Shah, regarded by many historians as the founder of modern Afghanistan. And we are working in the historic neighbourhood of Asheqan wa Arefan in Kabul, as well as in the Bar Durrani quarter of Herat. Historic cities most often attract the poorest amongst the poor, and therefore rehabilitating these spaces creates new opportunity for the most tragically marginalized.

Our experience in situations as diverse as remote parts of Northern Pakistan, to Delhi, Zanzibar and Central Cairo, is that the restoration of historic communities and important cultural assets serves as a trampoline for economic development. The restoration activity is a source of direct employment for workers and skilled craftsmen, many of whom live in adjacent neighbourhoods. The refurbished facilities themselves become an attraction for tourists, generating more opportunity. And as the residents of surrounding areas find themselves with new sources of income, they spend some of it improving their own homes and neighbourhoods.

These are the pragmatic reasons for revitalizing a nation's cultural assets. But equally, and perhaps, more important, these activities are restoring and preserving for Afghanistan its historic identity, whose rich pluralist heritage has suffered extraordinary stresses in recent decades. Afghanistan's historic geographic place at the cross-roads in the flow of goods, ideas, faiths and cultures between East and West, is the very essence of Afghanistan's international distinctiveness. It is also a heritage for the world to cherish.

Our consistent engagement on the entire development front, in many regions of Afghanistan, has meant, happily, that we have greatly surpassed our initial pledge of \$ 75 million, announced in 2002 at the Tokyo conference.

The Aga Khan Development Network and its partners have, together, expended \$380 million, of which \$150 million – twice our Tokyo pledge - has come from the Network's own resources. These funds have almost evenly been dedicated, on the one hand, to humanitarian assistance, rural development, health care, education and cultural revitalization; and, on the other hand, to productive economic investments. We are committed to these endeavours, and to scaling them up as circumstances permit.

This is, therefore, an appropriate occasion to acknowledge and thank our partners, who range from the World Bank, Asia Development Bank, the United Nations, and the European Community to the national development agencies of many countries. These last include agencies from Britain and Canada, France and Germany, India, the Netherlands and Norway, Switzerland, Japan and the U.S.A.

Together with the Government and people of Afghanistan, we all share a common goal: to enable the people of Afghanistan to determine their own future and to rebuild their nation.

The underpinning objective is to replace the risk of economic and social collapse with a new capacity, built on informed consent and knowledge capable of sustaining and guiding the transition from poverty to an improved quality of life based on choice and opportunity.

Thank you.

**Remarks Made by His Highness the Aga Khan Upon Receiving the Carnegie Medal for Philanthropy (Edinburgh, Scotland) 4 October, 20005**

Presiding Officer  
First Minister  
My Lords and Ladies  
Fellow Recipients  
Ladies and Gentlemen

My sincere thanks to the Scottish Parliament for welcoming us here today in this magnificent building, in the homeland of Andrew Carnegie.

Dr. Robinson, thank you for your most generous remarks. It is especially humbling to hear these kind words from an individual of such great accomplishment, who has served not only her own country with distinction, but also the global cause of human rights.

My thanks also to the worldwide network of Carnegie foundations, both for your continuing commitment to international development, and for your efforts to encourage generosity that crosses borders. The vision and the legacy of Andrew Carnegie, who was a role model for progressive philanthropy, are being well served by his successors.

And thank you also for the very great honour of this award. It is extremely gratifying to be counted among the accomplished recipients here today, as well as those of previous years, whose commitment to improving the dignity of humanity is a profound force for good in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, individual philanthropy is an important duty in all the major religions of the world.

In Islam, the Holy Quran offers explicit direction to share resources beyond one's requirements, and to care for the poor and those in need. The injunction to service is the ethical underpinning of the work of the Aga Khan Development Network. It drives its efforts to build the intellectual capital and institutions needed to address the problems of our world today. An example is the Global Centre for Pluralism which we have recently founded in partnership with the Government of Canada.

The achievements of the AKDN would not be possible without the tireless contributions of the global community of Ismailis that I lead, residing in Central and Southern Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America. Our volunteers and contributors also include many thousands of others from multiple cultures and faiths around the world. They are united with us in our mission to help build capacity and dignity for individuals, to enable them to take control of their own development.

These volunteers include those who contribute to the governance of the 200 entities of the AKDN in more than 30 countries, many others who support co-operatives, craft guilds, village organisations and women's groups, and still others who work closely with the vast array of grassroots civil society organisations that form the bedrock of our activities.

It is on behalf of these many thousands of selfless and dedicated men and women of multiple languages, cultures, faiths and nationalities, urban and rural, that I accept this award today.

Thank you.



## **Remarks Made by His Highness the Aga Khan Upon Receiving the Die Quadriga 2005 Prize in Recognition of the Work of the Aga Khan Development Network - 3 October, 2005**

I am deeply touched by the generosity of the remarks by President Karzai, an honoured Die Quadriga alumnus. His engagement and foresightedness are an inspiration to the Afghan people as they reclaim their proud nationhood and struggle to build a future of promise. We salute them and stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

Thank you also, President Mkapa, for honouring us with your presence. Yours has been an exemplary leadership for your people's fight against poverty, and their commitment to peace and harmony at home and within the region.

I am delighted to return once again to Germany on a day that marks the nation's reunification and its commitment to a strong democratic future.

It is a great honour to be among the distinguished recipients, past and present, of an award which celebrates the four virtues of harmony, friendship, valour and state wisdom. An enduring foundation of societal welfare, these values are at the heart of the ethics of Islam that guide the institutions of the Ismaili Imamate. The Die Quadriga organisers and sponsors are to be highly commended for seeking to uphold them for global peace and progress.

I accept the "United We Care" Award with much gratitude, and still greater humility. The credit for it belongs to many.

I am fortunate to lead an international community with a strong social conscience. Bridging North and South, East and West, the Ismailis have a long tradition of philanthropy, self-reliance and voluntary service.

Wherever they live, they faithfully abide by the Quranic ethic of a common humanity and the dignity of man. They willingly pool knowledge and resources with all those who share our social ethic to help improve the quality of life of less fortunate men, women and children.

This is the impulse that drives the Aga Khan Development Network, the AKDN. To understand this dimension of the religious office I hold, one must appreciate that Islam encompasses both the spiritual and the secular. This unity underpins an unrelenting effort towards an equitable order, where the vulnerable are helped to regain the dignity of self-fulfilment.

Long active in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South and Central Asia, the AKDN agencies and programmes help advance human development – cultural, economic and social. Experience convinces us that human progress can only be achieved and sustained when it is anchored in grassroots institutions of civil society, able to harness merit and build on pluralism, as bedrocks of democracy. We assist in building these organisations as well as for-profit institutions.

Our horizons, therefore, are long-term, promoting local capacities for self-development. The emphasis on cultural values helps people manage forces of change.

Many national and international, public and private, development agencies support our activities, in partnership with thousands of dedicated volunteers and professionals from different faiths and cultures. The German government works with us in strategically critical regions.

We are encouraged the World Bank has identified AKDN programmes, as far afield as Pakistan, Tajikistan and East Africa, as examples to scale up for global poverty reduction.

This Award is, therefore, a tribute to many: our institutional and individual collaborators, our volunteers, and, above all, to all those who struggle hard to take charge of their own development and destiny.

## **Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the American University of Beirut, 25 June 2005**

President Waterbury,  
Honoured Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most grateful to the American University of Beirut for this award. I accept it with much happiness and humility, cognisant of the great distinction and achievements of fellow recipients whom the University is also honouring.

I have a personal reason for being particularly pleased and grateful for the honour which AUB is bestowing upon me today: as I was completing my undergraduate years in Islamic studies at Harvard, I had been looking forward to further these studies at the post-graduate level in the Islamic world, and my choice at that time was AUB.

These post-graduate studies never became part of my life, as I inherited my responsibilities as Imam of Shia Ismaili Muslims upon my grandfather's death in 1957 while I was still an undergraduate.

Although I have never therefore been an enrolled student here, this great university has always been part of my academic horizon, where some 40 years ago, I supported the introduction of studies in Muslim civilisations and cultures through an Aga Khan Chair in that discipline.

This long relationship has been further strengthened by the valued support which AUB's faculty of architecture has given the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. AUB is now a founding partner in the development of ArchNet, a pioneering joint effort by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that offers a global, online research tool in the built environments of Muslim societies.

It is my hope that AUB will also collaborate in the new Global Centre for Pluralism that we are establishing in Ottawa, in partnership with the Canadian Government. This research and education centre will work with governments, academia, and civil societies in culturally diverse countries worldwide to help develop the tools and policy frameworks for promoting pluralist values and practices in all spheres of modern life.

AUB is eminently placed to contribute to this endeavour given its steadfast commitment to the ethic of inclusiveness. Nobody will forget the immense price that this university paid in the Lebanese civil war, but even this failed to deter it from its mission of building tolerance and understanding – so critical in the culturally diverse Lebanese society.

The University's fidelity to its founding notion that disciplined, objective inquiry is the property of all humanity, attracts faculty and students of high calibre from dozens of countries and cultures, challenged not only to excel in their chosen fields, but to place their knowledge in the wider context of humanity's pluralist heritage.

This is a core principle of my own faith – Islam – that learning is ennobling, regardless of the geographic or cultural origin of the knowledge we acquire.

Such teachings spurred a spiritually liberated people to new waves of adventure in the realms of the spirit and the intellect, amongst whose visible symbols were the University of al-Azhar and Dar al-Ilm established by my Fatimid ancestors in Cairo, and the illustrious counterpart institutions in Baghdad, Cordova, Bukhara, Samarkand and other Muslim centres.

There is an intimate, centuries-old link between the most glorious periods in Muslim and Judeo-Christian civilisations and their institutions of higher learning. In those terms, AUB is relatively young with a history that goes back nearly a century and a half, but it is recognised worldwide that during those 139 years, it has had an influence over Lebanon, and the region more generally, infinitely greater than its age. Clearly, it has chosen with great wisdom those

areas of knowledge which are particularly important for the future of the peoples in this part of the world, educating men and women to graduate with outstanding qualities of leadership.

The sentiments, which shaped this link, enlivening the great and civilising exchanges of knowledge and wisdom, are very much evident on this campus today. They are a legacy that is the strongest shield against clashes of ignorance.

Thank You.

## **Address by His Highness The Aga Khan Foundation Ceremony of The Delegation of the Ismaili Imam at Ottawa, Canada - June 6, 2005**

Your Excellency the Governor General  
Your Worship  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply touched by Your Excellency's kind words and generous welcome. I also thank the Government of Canada for the kindness and courtesies that have been extended to me during this and many other visits, and Your Worship for the hospitality of this beautiful city. I am particularly happy to welcome, and thank our distinguished guests for being with us on an occasion that is of special significance to the Ismaili community and Imam. For it marks a cherished moment, a milestone, in the forward flow of a valued relationship.

Nearly three and a half decades ago, Canada opened her shores to dispossessed thousands – Ismailis and others – who had been expelled from their homeland, Uganda, which was then in the grip of a brutal tyranny. Many, from such distressed lands as Afghanistan and Tajikistan, have also found, here, a welcome home.

With industry, intelligence, education and self-help, but above all, with all the reassurances that a just, pluralist society bestows, they were able rapidly to rebuild their lives and institutions, and are discharging their responsibilities as citizens of this great land and to the less privileged elsewhere. Today's occasion is, therefore, an appropriate opportunity to renew, on behalf of the Ismaili community and myself as their Imam, our lasting gratitude to the Government and people of Canada. The event which brings us together – the initiation of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam – is a celebration of the Ismaili community's permanent presence in, and commitment to Canada. Reflecting the pluralism of the Muslim world generally, the Ismailis are a richly diverse community within the Shia branch of Islam, who belong to distinct ethno-geographic and linguistic traditions, namely, Arab, Iranian, Central Asian, Chinese and South Asian. They live across Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, while in recent decades they have also established a substantial presence in North America and Europe. The Ismailis are, thus, a transnational community who are, first and foremost, active and loyal citizens of the countries where they live, though in outlook they transcend the divisions of North and South, East and West.

Whatever the context of their lives, they all share, like other Muslims, the commitment to an ethic whose values converge on the inherent dignity of the human person as the noblest of creation. Historically, Ismailis are united by a common allegiance to the living hereditary Imam of the time in the progeny of Islam's last and final Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) through his daughter Fatima and her husband, Hazrat Ali, the Prophet's cousin and the first Shia Imam. In the Muslim ethical tradition, which links spirit and matter, the Imam not only leads in the interpretation of the faith, but also in the effort to improve the quality of life of his community, and of the wider societies within which it lives; for a guiding principle of the Imam's institutions is to replace walls which divide with bridges that unite.

It is an honour and privilege to have Your Excellency with us at this initiation of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam. I also thank the National Capital Commission under the leadership of Chairman Marcel Beaudry, His Worship Mayor Robert Chiarelli, and Councillor Georges Bedard of the City of Ottawa, in whose ward the Delegation is located, and the capital's civic leadership generally for their vital support and consistent encouragement in the search for this site and its development.

The Delegation will serve a representational role for the Imam and its non-denominational, philanthropic and development agencies which constitute the Aga Khan Development Network – the AKDN. An open, secular facility, the Delegation will be a sanctuary for peaceful, quiet diplomacy, informed by the Imam's outlook of global convergence and the development of civil society. It will be an enabling venue for fruitful public engagements,

information services and educational programmes, all backed up by high quality research, to sustain a vibrant intellectual centre, and a key policy-informing institution.

The architectural planning has been entrusted to the capable hands of Fumihiko Maki, an architect of world standing. Maki and Associates have my enthusiastic admiration for addressing, with tact and empathy, challenges of design which are difficult and subtle. They call for translating concepts that have a context in our faith and our history, yet stride boldly and confidently ahead, into modernity; for expressing both the exoteric and the esoteric, and our awe and humility towards the mysteries of Nature, Time and beyond. The outcome is an inter-play of multiple facets, like rock crystal. In it are platforms of pure but translucent horizontality. Light's full spectrum comes alive and disappears as the eye moves. In Islam the divine is reflected in Nature's creation.

The building will rest on a solid linear granite podium. Above it will be a glass dome through which light will illuminate, from multiple directions, two symbolic spaces: an interior atrium and an exterior courtyard landscaped in four quarters, recalling the traditional Persian – Islamic garden, the Chahr-bagh. Nature, through the greenery of trees and flowers, will be on the site, but also in the building, just as we are sometimes able to see leaves and petals captured in rock crystal, but still visible through its unique translucency. The building will be a metaphor for humanism and enlightenment and for the humility that comes from the constant search for answers that leads inevitably to more questions.

The Delegation, with its openness and transparency, will be a symbolic seat for the Imam's permanent presence in Canada, and a platform for constructive exchanges that mutually broaden moral and intellectual horizons. It will be a window for the AKDN to reinforce existing, and cultivate new, partnerships with national and international agencies present in Ottawa, that share the ethic of contributing to an improved quality of life in the developing world. This concern to improve the human condition underlines the long standing relationship of the Ismaili Imam and the AKDN with Canada's Government and civil society institutions in many parts of Africa and Asia. Our presence in these areas, home to some of the most disadvantaged and diverse populations in the world, has exposed us jointly to a realistic appreciation of the problems of persistent under development, namely that human progress can only be sustained when people are able to participate in their own governance. Parliamentary elections are only one aspect of participation. Equally or perhaps more important is the access to a healthy, multi-faceted civil society pervading all areas of human interaction, rural and urban, able to seek out, and harness, the best from all segments of the population.

Successful experience with democracy, civil society and pluralism are the national genius of Canada of which much of the developing world is in dire need. As an example – and there are many – of how these Canadian assets can help transform living conditions, I often cite our experience in Northern Pakistan, a case study situation of poor development prospects in a harsh, sparsely endowed physical environment, further beset by ethnic and religious hostilities. The AKDN has been present there for over twenty years, with CIDA as a lead partner. Our joint micro experiment with grassroots democracy, civil society and pluralism has been the spring board for a dramatic trebling of per capita incomes, with corresponding improvements in social services and cultural awareness in what was once one of the poorest areas on earth. Tensions occasionally resurface, incited by mischief; but by and large, where once there was conflict born of despair and past memories, there is now a spirit of consensus built around hope in the future. This is, therefore, a good opportunity to acknowledge gratefully Canada's intellectual, institutional and financial contribution to a partnership with the AKDN in the creation of the new Global Centre for Pluralism here in Ottawa. A tribute to, and drawing on, Canada's experience of pluralist democracy, this research and education Centre will work closely with governments, academia and civil society in culturally diverse countries. The aim will be to foster policy and legislation, that enables pluralism to take root in all spheres of modern life: law, justice, the arts, media, financial services, health and education.

It is heartening that, in a report of March this year, the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade recognized the critical importance of developing partnerships with the countries of the Muslim world. It stressed the need to work, not only with their governments,

but also with civil society and minorities, in realizing Canada's key international policy objectives of sharing her experience of good governance and economic development. Acknowledging the contribution of Muslim civilisation to the West's own development, and Islam's affinity to the values of pluralism and liberal democratic principles, the Committee and the Government have signalled the intention to take steps to improve mutual understanding between Canada and the Muslim world.

The Delegation of the Ismaili Imam in the federal capital, the new Aga Khan Museum and the Ismaili Centre to be built in Toronto, are symbols of this seriousness and respect that Canada, leading the West generally, accords to the world of Islam, of which the Ismaili Community, though a diverse minority itself, is fully representative. May this mutual understanding, so important to the future stability and progress of our world, flourish many fold. It is my sincere hope that, by its presence and the functions it fulfils, the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam will be an illuminating landmark on "the Mile of History". An epitome of friendship to one and all, it will radiate Islam's precepts of one humanity, the dignity of man, and the nobility of joint striving in deeds of goodness.

Thank you.

**Address made by His Highness the Aga Khan Opening Ceremony of the IPI  
World Congress and 54th General Assembly  
Nairobi, KENYA - 22 May 2005**

Your Excellency President Kibaki,  
Your Excellency President Kagame,  
Mr. Fritz,  
Mr. Kiboro,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

My thanks to you, Mr. Kiboro, for your kind words and to the International Press Institute for your warm welcome.

Twenty-four years ago I had the honour of addressing this organisation at its 30th annual conference, also held here in Nairobi. Twenty-one years before that, in 1960, I established the Nation newspapers here.

At that time, many African nations had freshly emerged from colonial rule, and I believed that good journalism could play a critical role in their development.

Some may ask why a Muslim spiritual leader would get involved in the media business. In all interpretations of Islam, Imams are required to lead not only in interpreting the faith but also in improving the quality of life for the people who refer to them.

This ethical premise is the foundation of the Aga Khan Development Network, which has long been serving the developing world without regard to ethnicity, gender or race. My commitment to African media has been within this framework.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the quarter century since I first addressed IPI, both the state of governance and the state of the media in Africa have shown encouraging progress.

Not only has Africa moved beyond the worst legacies of colonialism, but it has also moved beyond the rigid constraints of the Cold War. Old dogmatisms, both of East and West, have given way to a new pragmatism—a new freedom to innovate, to experiment and to find African answers to African challenges.

Africa has learned a lot about democracy in these years—its fragility and its potential. Increasingly governments are expected to change hands peacefully, to cooperate regionally, to attract the capable and to punish the corrupt. And the progress reaches beyond governments. As the Economic Commission for Africa concluded in its recent report: “Civil society and the media have increased their voice and power in the last decade of democratic reforms.”

But there is still a long way to go—in the media field among others.

Let me begin with a concern which IPI has raised in its annual report: the erosion of press freedom in some African countries.

Respect for press freedom, it seems to me, grows out of a respect for pluralism as a cornerstone of peace and progress. Pluralism implies a readiness to listen to many voices—whether we agree with them or not—and a readiness to embrace a rich diversity of cultures.

When our diversity divides us, the results can be tragic—as we have seen in Rwanda, the Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan. But when we welcome diversity—and the debate and dissent that goes with it—we sow the seeds of stability and progress.

My concern for diversity and open expression was reflected recently as The Aga Khan Development Network joined with the Government of Canada to establish a Global Centre for

Pluralism in Ottawa. Its mission is to promote pluralist values and practices in culturally diverse societies worldwide, including here in Africa. The Centre will work with governments, academia and civil society, to enhance pluralism in every sphere—including the media.

But there is a second media-related question that I want to raise with you today, and that concerns the adequacy of journalistic knowledge in an increasingly complicated world.

What I often hear from Africa's leaders these days are serious misgivings about the depth of that knowledge, and genuine doubts about the breadth of understanding that many journalists bring to difficult issues. Clearly, a deeper and broader knowledge base will be a key to the future of African journalism.

This means that journalists must move beyond a primarily adversarial relationship with those they write about.

To be sure, the role of independent critic can be a vital role—but it is not the only role. If the dominating assumption of media is that the rest of society is up to no good, that the best journalism is what many call “gotcha” journalism, then the media will forfeit a more constructive and nobler role.

I believe that the best journalists are NOT those who think they know everything, but those who are wise enough to know what they do not know. Excellence in journalism, it seems to me, stems not from arrogant judgmentalism but from intellectual humility. As a wise judge once put it: “The spirit of liberty is the spirit that is not too sure that it is right.”

The major issues in Africa today are complex and elusive – and old approaches have often failed. But every day, leaders in Africa and elsewhere are thinking in new ways.

The revolution in bio-engineering, for example, promises to change rural societies as the old industrial engineering once reshaped urban landscapes. Genetic research – like the stem-cell breakthroughs which dominated front pages across the world just two days ago – will transform our approaches to personal and public health, including scourges like AIDS and malaria.

Meanwhile, the physical sciences offer new ways to think about the impact of climate change on Africa – and on its food and water supply. New information technologies will transform education throughout Africa – including the most remote rural areas, even as they re-energize non-industrial economies.

One of the most exciting aspects of scientific progress in the 21st century is that so much of it can be applied so directly in the rural environments of the developing world.

We no longer need to be urban in order to be modern.

My central question today, however, is whether we have enough good journalists who know enough about these subjects—and can help African audiences understand their African implications.

Good journalism is never easy—especially in an constantly-changing, impossibly fragmented and highly unpredictable world.

To monitor this world hour by hour, day after day, under deadlines pressures and often with inadequate resources--this is a daunting task.

But there are some ways to help.

For a start, we need to increase dialogue and communication among journalists and those they write about -- politicians, civil servants, business and religious leaders, the voices of civil society.



There are models for such exchange elsewhere in the world, including programmes which permit journalists to spend time working within the institutions they report about.

I could be a bit mischievous here and suggest some possibilities that might result if all the media employees ran the government for a month or two – and all government employees ran the media! But I will resist the temptation.

My serious point is that the media and those it covers could do much more to build bridges of mutual understanding. On the media side, this ought to mean more rigorous research—what I call “anticipatory research”—at the start of the reporting and writing process. Cultivating knowledge is as important as cultivating sources.

But the sources can also do more to help. Off-the-record background briefings, for example, are regular and routine in the West, but they are relatively rare in Africa. Some journalists have difficulty getting responses even to their direct requests. The habit of sharing information is a habit which Africa needs to hone.

Another challenge for African journalism is that we cannot find enough competently educated people.

Good journalism requires the best we can muster in terms of disciplined learning, intelligent analysis, prudent judgment, and nuanced expression. Most particularly, it requires people who can write clear and compelling prose. These are not qualities easily found in any society.

But the problem is particularly severe in Africa. The continent is desperately short of the well educated people it needs, not just in the liberal arts, but in virtually every field.

In an ideal world, journalists would be educated in the nuances of the beats they cover—and new beats which are emerging. Scientific sophistication, economic acumen, political subtlety, legal and medical expertise—all these skills should be present in our newsrooms as matter of course.

There are understandable reasons why this ideal is still not realized. For one thing, journalism has not been seen as a desirable profession. Too many young Africans, for too long, saw the journalist as a mere propagandist. And for many years journalism was a highly dangerous profession. Between 1985 and 1995, 108 journalists were killed in Africa and that risk, while diminishing, is still a reality.

Low compensation levels are another problem. Most African journalists are paid substantially less than those who enter other liberal professions. In addition, the quality of journalism education in Africa has often been deteriorating.

But none of these problems is intractable. I believe that a concerted effort to invest in the quality of African journalism can launch an upward spiral of progress.

There is one other front on which the battle must be waged, however, and it has to do with media owners and managers. Too often, those who set the media agenda see it primarily as a business agenda. Too often the measure of media success is simply financial profit.

I think this attitude is wrong – it often makes for manipulative media, distorting and misleading in a narrow pursuit of readers and ratings.

It means that journalism is subordinated to entertainment, and that the need to inform must yield to the need to please.

Responsible and relevant reporting is NOT the priority in that business model. Instead, the power of the press is used to turn traditional value systems on their heads – to take what is really quite unimportant and to make it seem very important, to take what is trivial and to make it seem titillating. In that context, what is most truly significant must yield to what is most readily saleable.

The damage that can be done by such distorted journalism is especially heavy in Africa, offending African value systems, distracting African energies and mis-serving African development.

Manipulative journalism is not merely a nuisance here – it can have destructive power.

Yet journalism at its best can be a strong pillar in building Africa's future.

One disadvantage, of being both a media proprietor and a media critic is that one is eventually obliged to follow one's own advice!

I am pleased to tell you, therefore, that our own Nation Media Group has been taking on these challenges.

Our need for competent journalists has been expanding as we have grown in the last decade from a small newspaper company – publishing daily in one country, into a multi-national, multi-media company, with publications in three countries, along with a growing radio, television and internet presence.

To improve our human resource base, we have been organizing school outreach programs, designed to attract more of the best and brightest students to the profession. We have revamped our compensation systems—and put new emphasis on life-long education and training. And this work continues.

Ladies and gentlemen, one cannot work in international development for nearly fifty years without being optimistic about the potential for human progress.

That outlook, and my connections to this region going back to childhood, allow me to say with confidence that the Promise and Potential of Africa is great. Equally, forty-some years in the African media business have convinced me that the media can play a vital role in the African development story.

Working in partnership with governments, with the private sector and with the institutions of civil society, African media can—I am sure-- be a burgeoning source of relevant and responsible information, a reliable locus of competent comment and insight, a constructive and cooperative partner even as it remains a free and independent player, commercially successful at the same time that it is socially responsible.

If that happens, then the African press will indeed be a leading force in fulfilling the Promise and Potential of Africa.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
Nobel Institute, Oslo, Norway, 7 April 2005  
Democratic Development, Pluralism and Civil Society**

Madame Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank the Government of Norway and Minister Johnson for the invitation to speak here this morning and for her generous words of introduction. Madame Minister, the exchanges we have enjoyed since we met yesterday has been highly constructive.

I am particularly honoured to be speaking at the Nobel Institute, respected worldwide for its promotion and recognition of exceptional endeavours to reduce human conflict.

It is also a rare privilege to address such a learned and experienced audience which includes not only officials in government charged with issues of human development, but also leaders of Norwegian civil society who are important partners in Norway's impressive international development efforts.

In my remarks today I will propose to you several questions which I will attempt to go some way toward answering:

- First, why are so many democracies failing in Asia and Africa?
- Second, is enough being done to help these young countries achieve successful forms of democratic governance?
- Third, are there common factors causing this failure of democracies?
- Fourth, why is the international community unable to get engaged at the early stages before crisis occurs?
- And finally, what can be done?

Before I begin, perhaps I can give you some background on my perspective.

My role in human development stems from my position as Imam or spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, as designated by my grandfather in 1957.

In all interpretations of Islam, Imams, whether they are Shia or Sunni, are required not only to lead in the interpretation of the faith, but equally to contribute to improving the quality of life of the people who refer to them. This dual obligation is often difficult to appreciate from the viewpoint of Christian interpretations of the role which Church leaders are expected to perform.

It is on this ethical premise, which bridges faith and society, that I established the Aga Khan Development Network. Its multiple agencies and programmes have long been active in many areas of Africa and Asia that are home to some of the poorest and most diverse populations in the world, serving people without regard to their ethnicity, gender or faith.

The community I lead of Shia Ismaili Muslims is culturally, ethnically and linguistically, very diverse. Their main concentration is in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. In recent decades the community has also established a substantial presence in North America and Western Europe.

We have lived through colonialism and independence, two World Wars, the Cold War and many local and regional wars. We have seen the collapse of the Soviet Union and the birth of new states. The pendulum has swung from private ownership to nationalisation and back to privatisation. And we have lived in democracy and under dictatorship.

The community and its institutions are in many ways a microcosm of the last century in the developing world and we have learned many lessons.

Ladies and gentlemen, I put it to you that no human development initiative can be sustainable unless we are successful in achieving three essential conditions.

- First, we must operate in an environment that invests in, rather than seeks to stifle, pluralism and diversity.
- Second, we must have an extensive and engaged civil society.
- And third, we must have stable and competent democratic governance.

These three conditions are mutually reinforcing. Taken together, they allow developing societies gradually to become masters of the process and make that process self sustainable.

I will speak first about pluralism.

The effective world of the future will be one of pluralism, a world that understands, appreciates and builds on diversity. The rejection of pluralism plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts, from which no continent has been spared in recent decades.

But pluralist societies are not accidents of history. They are a product of enlightened education and continuous investment by governments and all of civil society in recognising and celebrating the diversity of the world's peoples.

What is being done to support this key value for society and for democracy in Asia and Africa, to pre-empt catastrophe, rather than simply respond to it?

The Aga Khan Development Network intends to help create some permanent institutional capacity to address this critical issue through a Global Centre for Pluralism. It will be based in Ottawa to draw from Canada's successful record in constructing and sustaining pluralist civil society. The centre will work closely with governments and with academia and civil society around the world.

The centre will seek to foster legislation and policy to strengthen developing countries' capacity for enhancing pluralism in all spheres of modern life: including law, justice, the arts, the media, financial services, health and education.

I believe leadership everywhere must continuously work to ensure that pluralism, and all its benefits, become top global priorities.

In this effort, civil society has a vital role. By its very nature, civil society is pluralist because it seeks to speak for the multiple interests not represented by the state. I refer, for example, to organisations which ensure best practices such as legal societies and associations of accountants, doctors and engineers. The meritocracy they represent is the very foundation of pluralism. And meritocracy is one of the principles of democracy itself.

Village organisations, women's and student groups, micro-credit entities and agricultural co-operatives help give access and voice to those who often are disenfranchised.

Journalist associations also play a key role, explaining the political process, guarding against corruption and keeping governments accountable. Responsible reporting and competent comment on critical issues, and the hard choices that society must address, are an essential element in the functioning of a democracy.

Civil society organisations make a major contribution to human development, particularly when democracies are failing, or have failed; for it is then that the institutions of civil society can, and often do, carry an added burden to help sustain improvements in quality of life.

I believe strongly that a critical part of any development strategy should include support for civil society. I know that Norway supports this approach and works actively with its own civil society organizations to build capacity in the developing world. Twinning civil society

institutions is a promising approach, to which the Aga Khan Development Network institutions and programmes are very receptive.

Let me turn now to the question of democratic governance. If we were to look at a map of the world that charted armed conflicts in the last 15 years, it would show that nearly two thirds have occurred in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. More than 80 per cent were internal conflicts, either full-blown civil wars or state-sanctioned aggression against minorities in those countries.

In nearly every instance, these internal conflicts were predictable because they were the culmination of a gradual deterioration in pluralist, inclusive governance. In too many cases – and I can speak here of our experiences in Uganda, Bangladesh, Tajikistan and Afghanistan – this sad but foreseeable turn of events has had severely adverse effects lasting more than a generation.

The question I have is this: if these breakdowns in governance were predictable, why was the international community powerless to get engaged at the early stages to help arrest the deterioration and avoid the suffering that resulted? Secondly, are there common factors in the majority of these situations which are insufficiently recognized?

I suggest to you that a major problem is that the industrialised world too often is severely lacking in credible information about the forces at play in the developing world.

Take as an example the phrase “clash of civilisations” which has travelled far and wide. I have said many times previously, and I would like to reconfirm today my conviction that what we have been observing in recent decades is not a clash of civilisations but a clash of ignorance. This ignorance is both historic and of our time.

This is not the occasion to analyse the historic causes of the deep ignorance that exists between the Judeo-Christian and Muslim worlds. But I am convinced that many of today's problems could have been avoided if there had been better understanding and more serious dialogue between the two.

The issue of ignorance, or lack of solid information, and its impact on our world today, is illustrated by events in Iraq. No less deplorable is that the 9/11 attack on the United States was a direct consequence of the international community ignoring the human tragedy that was Afghanistan at that time. Both the Afghan and Iraqi situations were driven by lack of precise information and understanding.

My fundamental point is this: Since the collapse of the Cold War, the need has grown exponentially for the world's leaders to be able to understand, and properly predict, what is likely to happen in parts of the world in which they previously had no reason to be involved.

The task of addressing this need cannot be met by the resources presently being engaged.

I note that Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Petersen, spoke of this very problem just last week in Beijing. He called for the international community to provide assistance in governance for fragile states that is, and I quote: “more systematic, more strategic, more persevering and more reliable.”

My suggestion is to examine this question in depth.

Let me share with you some real world field examples. Just as we read about the supposed clash of civilisations, we read about so-called “failed states.” In fact, at least in my definition of a state, it cannot fail. What we are observing in reality is the massive failure of democracy around the world.

I estimate that some 40% of the states of the United Nations are failed democracies. Depending upon the definitions applied, between 450 million and 900 million people currently live in countries under severe or moderate stress as a result of these failures.

To me, therefore, a central question is why these democracies are failing and what can the world's nations and international organisations do to sustain their competence and stability.

Let me now illustrate some specific issues which I believe are contributing to this fragility.

A number of countries in which we are active have opted to harness enormous resources to universal primary education, causing a significant under-expenditure on secondary and tertiary education. This educational policy originated from a number of ill-advised social economists in the early 60s.

This degradation of secondary and tertiary education is not a new phenomenon. It is being made significantly worse today due to the lack of educational resources available to secondary and tertiary students who, after all, will represent the leaders of tomorrow.

Secondly, if governance is a science, as I believe it is, developing countries must educate about governance at secondary and tertiary levels. Otherwise, they deprive their intelligentsia of academic grounding in the critical knowledge of how democratic states operate.

A survey today in secondary schools or universities in Africa or Asia would find that "government," as a subject in its own right, is either non-existent or given low priority.

It is clear that over the next decades, a large number of countries will be designing new constitutions, or refining existing ones, and new regional groupings will come into place. Many young democracies will spawn new political structures. But where are the men and women who will lead?

Just as education in governance is weak, the developing world continues to suffer from insufficient support to certain liberal professions which are critical to democracy. In my experience, the teaching profession and journalism are failing to attract the level of men and women who are essential for these liberal professions to make their appropriate contribution to democracy.

The challenge is therefore, clear. We must create the human and institutional resources to build and sustain young democracies.

As long as the developed world hesitates to commit long term investment towards education for democracy, and instead laments the issue of so-called failed states, much of the developing world will continue to face bleak prospects for democracy.

And the West should not discount that an accumulation of failed democracies could be a serious threat to itself and its values, capable of causing – if not conflict – deep under currents of stress among societies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, what seems apparent today is that the developed world must find the resources to provide consistent and meaningful assistance to fragile states struggling with democratic governance.

The world cannot sit by while countries spiral into crisis.

Some of the things we can do, I suggest to you, are as follows:

- A greater commitment to build capacity in the developing world to teach the science of government.
- An aggressive effort to support indigenous civil society, both to assist in the building of democracies and to provide a buttress in times of stress.
- Active encouragement and support for pluralism.
- And above all, we must set about to improve knowledge and understanding of the factors in the developing world that are encouraging or undermining democratic governance.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park  
Friday, 25th March 2005**

Bi-'smi Llahi 'r-Rahmani 'r-Rahim

Madame Mubarak, Excellencies, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Twenty-one years ago we had a vision that launched us on a journey of inquiry, exploration and discovery that took us through some 1,000 years of history of this extraordinary city.

It was a journey in which we engaged with historians, archeologists, architects and horticulturalists. We worked with engineers, statisticians, sociologists and urban planners. We met with neighbourhood residents and businessmen, artisans and entrepreneurs, young people and old.

Like some of the great Muslim explorers such as Al-Idrisi, Al-Baruni or Ibn Batuta, our journey of discovery was an act of faith. We did not know what lay ahead, other than excitement and unpredictability. And we knew that it could be enthralling but would require patience, determination and tenacity.

The path we followed has led us finally to this evening, at the inauguration of this magnificent park with so many who have contributed to this historic achievement. Thank you all so much for being here. And thank you for your support.

There are too many people to thank individually. Let me start by expressing my warmest appreciation to President and Mrs. Mubarak. Without your support and commitment, our journey would not have gone beyond the first step.

Let me also thank the Minister of Culture, Farouk Hoshni, and his ministry; the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the present Secretary-General Dr. Zahi Hawass and his predecessor, Dr. Gaballah; the Governorate of Cairo, the current Governor Dr. Abdel Azim Wazier and his predecessors, Dr. Abdel Rahim Shehata and Omar Abdel Akher. I also want to acknowledge the Egyptian Ambassadors to France who were so helpful in the early stages of the project.

Her Excellency Madame Suzanne Mubarak understood from the very beginning we were creating not just a park - as great an achievement as that would be. The First Lady recognised we were giving birth to a catalyst for social, economic and cultural renewal and improvement that would grow for many years to come. She knew it would have far-reaching consequences for the urban fabric of one of the city's most historic, yet poorest neighbourhoods, touching some 200,000 individuals. The agencies of the Egyptian government were quick to see that as well, and they helped to create the enabling environment that made the project achievable.

Our experience in creating Al-Azhar Park has taught us important new lessons that will contribute to the international body of knowledge about preservation and development in world heritage cities, a substantial portion of them in the Muslim world.

We already have similar, if somewhat smaller-scale initiatives underway in the Stone Town in Zanzibar, at Bagh-e-Babur in Kabul, Afghanistan, and we will soon launch projects in Djenne and Mopti in Mali.

A fundamental lesson, which reinforced our experience in other countries, is that public-private partnerships can be effective mechanisms for enhancing the value of underused, unappreciated or even unknown social, cultural and economic assets.

The private, not-for-profit entities of The Aga Khan Development Network, led by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, have been able to forge effective partnerships with government agencies at all levels here in Egypt and with a range of international, national and local NGOs and institutions. Without them, this project would not have been successful.

I would include here, the Swiss Egyptian Development Fund, the Ford Foundation, the World Monuments Fund, the French Institute of Archaeology, the city of Stuttgart and the newest donor, the Social Fund for Development.

A second fundamental lesson is that when embarking on a project of this complexity we must be prepared for the unpredictability of discovery. There will be delays and added costs, but there will also be new and interesting opportunities. And each opportunity must be assessed to ensure it brings additional value at acceptable cost.

This, after all, is a project that cost several times the original budget and took more than 20 years from vision to realisation.

This is because what started as one project actually turned into three: the design and construction of a park, the restoration of the Ayyubid Wall, and the community redevelopment of the historically-important Darb al-Ahmar neighbourhood. All are tightly interconnected and have added to the body of knowledge we can share with others.

Here in the park for example, we faced major engineering challenges in adapting the site. Then we had to select plants that would thrive in arid local conditions. The American University of Cairo established an off-site nursery for propagation and testing and as a result, the number of species planted is a new benchmark for park spaces in the region.

The Ayyubid Wall presented another particular challenge because so much of it had been covered by centuries of debris. We did not know how long it was, or how deep. We did not understand the complexity of the structure, or what archeological treasures it contained.

Portions of the wall had been buried for 500 years or more since the time of the Mamluks. We also found sections where buildings had seriously encroached on the wall.

These discoveries required detailed pilot investigations, in partnership with the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The result was unique policies aimed at avoiding harm to archeological sites, respecting cultural heritage and safeguarding authenticity. That in turn helped us develop appropriate training for local craftsmen and artisans to shape their skills and to apply them to this project.

The lessons from Darb al-Ahmar are a compelling case study of the complex interactions that result from restoration in a densely-populated and historically-sensitive urban area. It is a story that continues to unfold and will do so for many years to come.

We found Darb al-Ahmar to be a resilient community with a large pool of skilled workers and small entrepreneurs. We were able to engage them in the restoration of houses and schools and the rebuilding of minarets that had long ago disappeared from the Cairo skyline.

Another lesson here was the important role that microfinance could play in helping residents of this community lift themselves beyond subsistence, enabling them to grow businesses and upgrade the quality of their living conditions.

Ladies and gentlemen, it has indeed been a long and interesting journey of discovery that has brought us to this evening. Many projects continue and there are, no doubt, many surprises to come and many more lessons to be learned.

I look forward to that because this process has been particularly satisfying for me from a very personal perspective.

In our excavations and our historical investigations, I constantly have been reminded that we were touching the very foundations of my ancestors, the Fatimids, and the pluralistic history and intellectual profile of this city and this country to which they contributed so profoundly.

I am very humbled by the opportunity to return to Cairo, founded over a thousand years ago by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Muiz, to build on that history.



Thirty-five generations later, through the work done here by my institutions, it is my prayer that this park will be a continuing contribution to the people of this great city."

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan Launch of the second phase of the expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital, Dar-es Salaam  
Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania, 18 March 2005**

President Mkapa, Excellencies, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for joining us today to celebrate the launch of the second phase of the expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital.

Yesterday, President Mkapa joined me for the groundbreaking of the new Aga Khan Academy School to be built here in Dar-es Salaam. The President spoke eloquently about the need to increase the capacity in Africa to educate and retain more indigenous professionals and to reduce the costly dependence upon expatriates.

Mr. President, you will be pleased to know that our vision for this hospital, and our wider health strategy for East Africa, are entirely consistent with those views.

This hospital already plays an important role in supporting medical education and health care delivery for the people of Dar es Salaam, and those referred to it from our up-country medical centers in Morogoro, Dodoma, Iringa, Mbeya, and Mwanza. The new facilities planned for this site will enhance that capacity further. It will also solidify the hospital's wider role in education and health delivery for East Africa.

The goal is to invest in medical education, and health care facilities, to enable the delivery of patient care to international standards in a wider spectrum of medical specialities.

And we will continue to reach far beyond this facility and this community to help others strive for that level as well.

This regional approach will allow us to offer the best in training for medical specialists, nurses and medical technicians in East Africa. We will also have the facilities and the equipment to enable them to practice in their chosen fields of expertise.

I have every confidence we will be able to train and retain more specialists here in East Africa. I also have reason to hope that some medical specialists who have left to practice abroad may be persuaded to return.

Our approach is being driven by powerful trends that are rapidly changing health care practice and patient care demands throughout the world. Increased medical specialisation and advances in pharmacology, diagnosis and surgical techniques are making possible dramatic improvements in patient care. They are also changing the way health care is delivered, altering the mix between treatments that require hospitalization and most effective out-patient and community-based care.

We are also seeing here in Tanzania and East Africa generally, rising demands for cardiac, orthopedic and oncology treatment very similar to those in the industrialised world. And there is of course the added challenge of malaria and HIV/AIDS.

We expect these trends to accelerate here as they have internationally. And unless we make significant investments in education as well as new equipment and facilities, East Africa will fall further behind in health care delivery.

Let me say a few words first about education.

Through linkages between the Schools of Medicine and Nursing of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University, and the Aga Khan teaching hospital in Nairobi, we are building here in Dar-es Salaam a regional hub of quality medical and nursing services. This hospital will be part of what amounts to a regional teaching hospital network.

Post Graduate Medical Education programmes are already in place between here and the Aga Khan teaching hospital in Nairobi. The family medicine post graduate programme has been placed at this hospital, in part because of the important links to our five up-country

community health clinics. Other post-graduate medical programmes will be established here in future. These programmes will be opened to physicians from our own and other hospitals to gain greater regional synergies. The hospital already has a partnership with the Muhimbili College of Health Sciences at the University of Dar es Salaam. Rotations for specialising physicians help them gain valuable clinical experience.

The hospital has been able to bring experts from abroad to help train medical staff in new surgical techniques. In the last six months, for example, the volume of less-invasive procedures known as keyhole surgery has increased significantly.

This is thanks to the assistance of an international specialist who has overseen training on recently-acquired laparoscopic equipment. In Nairobi, currently there are post graduate programmes in surgery, internal medicine and radiology.

But it is also in nursing education that we have made important commitments:

Our regional nursing education programme trains nurses in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. However it is here in Tanzania that it is considered the most successful. The East African regional programme now has more than 400 graduates. From this hospital alone, 45 nurses are currently enrolled in diploma and degree programmes – half of all the hospital nursing staff.

In addition to enhancing the status of professional women, we believe that by creating better academic opportunity for nurses and a rewarding work environment, we help reduce the rapid and damaging outflow of these crucial resources to the developing world.

Of course, the best training can only be put into practice with the right facilities. The aim of the Aga Khan Hospital is to create a virtuous circle of excellent training combined with the best facilities to increase the range of medical specialties at the hospital. That in turn will increase the capacity to train others.

Phase One of the hospital expansion, which opened five years ago, included a new Emergency Room department, 18 out-patient consulting clinics, a laboratory and a pharmacy.

It also included 56 new pediatric and medical-surgical in-patient beds in an air conditioned environment.

Since then the hospital has built up a sophisticated radiology department. In addition to x-ray and ultrasound technology, the hospital has added mammography, specialist dental and CAT scanners. Most recently the hospital acquired the county's first MRI scanner. The MRI means that more referrals, and patients, will be able to benefit from enhanced diagnostic accuracy, and patients will no longer need to travel abroad for these investigations.

The range of specialists available in the hospital supports the very busy out-patient clinics, which serve 100,000 patients a year. They also enable the hospital to provide specialist emergency treatment on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week.

Phase Two of the expansion, which we are launching today, will increase capacity further.

Five new operating theatres will be added. Maternity delivery rooms will increase to four from the current two. The intensive care unit will expand from four beds to 12.

There will also be further improvements in the radiology department to bring all these services together in one physical department and add new ultrasound capacity. There will be new physiotherapy facilities as well.

The new operating theatres will enable the hospital to do more advanced cardiac and orthopedic surgery. They will include modern air flow control technologies, to reduce significantly the risk of infection. This is particularly important for orthopedic surgery where the complications from infection can be extremely serious.

Tanzanians will thus no longer have to seek this kind of advanced treatment outside the country, at considerable cost and inconvenience.

Any hospital that expands its services, introduces new equipment, and harnesses new medical practitioners must pay special attention to quality care. To address this issue the hospital has also created 20 departmental quality teams to review working practices and ensure they progress to international standards. And it receives 200 questionnaires a month from patients to measure their perceptions of our services. The hospital was proud to receive ISO 9001 certification in October of 2003.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence in Dar-es Salaam  
Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania, 17 March 2005**

President Mkapa, Honoured Guests and Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for being with us today. Your presence on this important occasion is very special to us.

Mr. President you have been a most staunch supporter of a new Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development here in Dar-es Salaam. And you have espoused vigourously the launching of a new Academy.

One hundred years ago my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, visited this region to celebrate the opening of the first Aga Khan School in Zanzibar. Two years later, a second school was opened here in Dar-es Salaam.

My grandfather was totally convinced of the importance of education for all young men and women.

He would have been, I believe, immensely pleased that those first two educational institutions were the beginnings of a network that would eventually grow to more than 300 schools in Africa and Asia, from pre-primary to higher secondary. He himself opened some 200 schools and was the founding figure of the first university for Muslims in India, Aligarh, before he passed away in 1957. Since then, our post-secondary system has expanded to include the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

For the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Aga Khan School system grew essentially to serve the needs of the Ismaili Community. In a world of colonial governments, each community in East Africa was required to educate in schools specific to their race.

As independence was achieved across Asia and Africa in the post-war period, new nationalist governments asked what was to be the role of their country's educational system in building a wider sense of nationhood. Many private and community schools were brought into the national system, voluntarily or through nationalisation. Teaching in national languages was emphasised.

But it became evident that governments of developing countries could not alone carry the mounting cost of providing education to their growing numbers of children. Private initiatives would have to play a part. It also became clear teaching in the English language was essential because it had become the global language of diplomacy, education, transport, science, commerce and medicine.

The Ismaili schools across Asia and Africa lived through this process. They were among the first to open their doors to other communities. They had retained English as an essential language and they sought continuously to improve by professionalising and upgrading teachers and administrators. They also built strong relationships with other schools in the Aga Khan network as well as with the national school systems.

Many who attended those schools were able not only to achieve their own potential, but to make an important contribution to the development of their communities and their countries.

I would include here His Worship Mayor Kleist Sykes who is an alumnus of the Aga Khan Boys Secondary. He has made a distinguished contribution to Tanzania in international organizations, as a businessman and as mayor of Dar-es Salaam. Your Worship, Mayor Sykes, we are honoured by your presence today and by your fine example.

Throughout this changing educational environment our schools sought to achieve regional excellence in Asia and Africa. One question was ever present, but never overtly articulated: will Aga Khan Schools ever be able to offer educational standards that will compete with the best, and I mean the very best, in the industrialised world? Today the answer is a vibrant, confident, yes.

This will be achieved through a new kind of school, indeed a network of schools, known as the Aga Khan Academies. One Academy is already opened in Mombasa and the foundation stone has been laid for another in Maputo.

Our Academies represent a commitment to an international standard of excellence for facilities, for faculty and for curriculum. They offer student-centred interactive learning that stimulates inquiry and analysis, encourages critical thinking and builds the foundation for lifelong learning. They aim to produce students with strong value systems who have a broad understanding of the pluralist world.

The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship. They will leave these institutions not only with a thorough grounding in the humanities, the arts and social sciences: They will have studied comparative religion, global free market economics, government and political science, including the various forms of functional and dysfunctional democracy.

They will have spent at least one year studying at an Academy in another country and they will also have mastered at least one foreign language. In short, they will grow up in an educational environment with new areas of knowledge which will be essential for the future.

Over the next 10 years, we plan to open over 19 Academies. They will form part of an international network linked not only with each other, but with some of the best educational institutions in the world. We have already developed academic partnerships with the Phillips Academy in Andover, USA, with the Schule Schloss in Salem Germany.

Some people have referred to the Academies as schools for the elite. I prefer to think of them as schools for the exceptional.

The students who come here will be exceptional because they will have capabilities and character that make them stand out from their peers. And we will ensure through scholarships that exceptional students will be admitted even if they do not have the financial means.

I believe deeply that if developing countries are to be successful in their aim of becoming modern economies with living standards comparable to the West, we must focus not only on universal access to education for the majority or even all of the population. We must also make available educational opportunities at the top international standard for the exceptional students who stand out from the rest.

The reality is that not all students are created equal intellectually. And exceptional individuals are as abundant in the developing world as anywhere else, from the cities and from the countryside. The pity is that too many in the developing world are never given the opportunity to have their minds challenged and stretched and developed to their full potential. Therefore we must strive to create institutions of learning that can help them maximise the potential to study, to learn and to function at the highest international intellectual levels.

I believe this for three reasons.

The first has to do with students. If world class facilities are available here in Tanzania, we reduce the risk that students with the financial means will go abroad to study, many of them never to return and contribute here. And those who do not have the financial ability to study abroad will find the opportunity for an education on par with any institution in the world, right here in Tanzania. This also will help improve the quality of students seeking entrance to national universities.

The second reason has to do with teachers. The Academies will make a substantial contribution to helping uplift the overall quality of education in the communities and countries where they are located. We intend these Academies to be beacons of academic excellence which will attract the best teachers. Some will be recruited from other parts of the world, both for long-term appointments and short-term rotations, bringing with them fresh ideas and bountiful experience. Many more will be educated and trained here.

The faculty of the Academies will do more than teach our students. They will also reach out to schools and teachers in the surrounding community to share their knowledge through formal Professional Development Programmes and informal guidance and mentoring. In this way, the imprint of the Academies will reach far beyond their physical facilities.

This particular Academy will be co-located with a branch of the Institute of Educational Development of the Aga Khan University. This Institute is dedicated to research and teacher training at Baccalaureate level, at the leading edge of pedagogical practice and curriculum content.

The third reason for building exceptional schools in Africa and Asia has to do with building bridges to the industrial world. As residential schools teaching in English with international curricula, the Academies will be excellent venues for students from industrial countries to do studies as part of their "Year Abroad" programmes. This will enable students from developed countries to learn about the developing world by living within it and to carry that knowledge into their chosen careers. These exchanges may start with students from our partner schools at Salem and Andover.

The first Academy in Mombasa already has developed international linkages by incorporating the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, or IB, in the junior and senior schools. The IB is currently offered by nearly 1,500 schools in more than 100 countries, and it has become the only truly international secondary graduation diploma. Students with the IB are accepted by more than 1,700 universities worldwide without further testing.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my profound hope the Aga Khan Academy in Dar es Salaam will represent a wonderful opportunity for young Tanzanians of exceptional talent. They will be able to pursue an education in the best of facilities with outstanding faculty and peers.

But no truly worthwhile opportunity comes without some risk. The risk we confront here is willfully to build an educational institution that dares to compare its students, curriculum, faculty and premises with the best in the world. We are saying that success will be based solely upon merit, judged against an international standard.

Once we accept that challenge, there will be no turning back. For one thing certain today is that best practices continue to evolve at a rapid pace in every discipline, education being no exception. A world class standard is therefore, by definition, a constantly evolving standard.

I have every confidence we are up to the challenge at the Aga Khan Academies. And I am just as confident that the exceptional students who will attend this institution will be up to the challenge as well.

One hundred years from now, I believe that our successors will look back at the founding of the Aga Khan Academies as an important milestone in the development of Tanzania and East Africa.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan Scully Seminar Speech Washington DC, USA, 26 January 2005**

Honoured Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I believe profoundly that architecture is not just about building. It is a means of improving people's quality of life. At its best, it should mirror the plurality of cultural traditions and the diverse needs of communities, both urban and rural. At the same time it must employ modern technologies to help fulfill desirable aspirations for the future.

In Islam, the Holy Koran says that man is God's noblest creation to whom He has entrusted the stewardship of all that is on earth. Each generation must leave for its successors a wholesome and sustainable social and physical environment.

For these reasons, in 1977 I began working with leading architects, philosophers, artists, teachers, historians and thinkers -- from all religious faiths -- to examine issues in the built environment and to establish an Award for Architecture.

The task was extremely difficult and, some thought, impossible. We sought to reshape and reposition knowledge and taste and to change the behaviour of those who have an impact on the built environment. That meant not just architects and their clients, but governments, planners, granting organisations, village organisations, educational institutions and builders, large and small, in urban and rural areas.

If we could achieve this, there was a real chance we could launch a process that would become self sustaining, to help bring about the truly profound change we sought.

That led us on a long journey of inquiry and action based upon a premise which, strangely enough, was never put formally into writing.

We were interested in architectural achievement, not just in design, but with how good design could help improve the daily lives of the users and beneficiaries. It was from this service perspective that the Award parameters grew.

One example was the definition of architecture. The users were largely in developing countries. So we pushed our definition far beyond the so-called "architected" buildings and into self-built environments, many of them in rural areas, most of them poor.

It was from this notion of service to people that we were led to search for best practices. We sought examples of best practice for vastly different local situations -- from the ultra-poor in rural environments to the ultra-rich cities and towns of oil producing states. The solutions we found ranged from restoration of historic buildings to the new high-tech buildings of modern societies.

The criteria for best practice varied to reflect conditions. Poor communities, for example, do not have the resources to replace buildings every few decades. So we looked to best practice that emphasised efficient and creative refurbishing or to new construction designed for a much longer economic service life than industrialized countries.

As the inquiry process became more widely known in the communities where we were focused, they responded to us with two basic requests: first, teach us how to do things differently and second, show us examples of best practices in real world situations.

In response, a number of parallel programmes were spawned to teach these best practices, such as the Programme for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT and the online ArchNet resource which supports global dialogue and research.

We were challenged with finding ways of making these best practices available to broad segments of the population in order to have a continuous and positive effect. In the developed



world, that would mean reaching the middle classes. In the developing world, it meant making these best practices accessible to the poor.

We have had some success in this regard through our Historic Cities Support Programme which we launched to develop best-practice models in the real world. That programme has been applied in some of the poorest settlements, many of them in rural areas. We have shown how human and material resources can be applied to deteriorated and under-used cultural assets. The result has been new economic activity and better quality of life.

So I am pleased that 28 years later, we have had some success in achieving our original goals. We are gratified that so many others now are engaged in the cause. We have created a momentum that has become a self-sustaining and unstoppable force for change in the human habitat of the Muslim world. And I am most pleased the principles we have established are having an impact in much of the developed world as well.

But there is still much to be done.

Quality housing remains the most essential need for societies everywhere, both in rural and urban environments. Industrial facilities and workplaces are not at a level of excellence that makes them exceptional.

Rapidly-expanding urban centres throughout the world lack public parks and open urban spaces. Problems of transport, congestion and pollution have too few solutions emerging. The growth of slums, the consequence of the relentless forces of urbanisation, has not been stopped or even slowed down.

And although many fine examples of rural projects have been represented in past Award cycles, still there are not enough.

I am also concerned there is still too little attention being paid to design for communities to protect residents from the effects of earthquakes, many of them in remote rural areas. Two million people died as a result of earthquakes in the last century and 100 million were severely affected. There are vast populations that live in seismic-sensitive high-mountain areas where we must focus attention.

And the massive devastation of the Indian Ocean tsunami has taught us a terrible lesson that the destructive power of earthquakes can reach far beyond the initial disturbance. It will no doubt lead to new thinking and new approaches toward seaside construction.

So we are by no means at the end of our task. To quote Churchill, we may be at the end of the beginning.

I hope the next quarter century of the Award will contain as much innovation and surprise as the first. To the extent that it does, it will be thanks to the many hundreds of capable individuals who have given so generously, and continue to give, of their time, their knowledge and their talent. To all of them, I am enormously grateful.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan, Scully Award Acceptance  
Washington DC, USA, 25 January 2005**

Honoured Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

First I would like to thank Charles Correa and Jim Wolfensohn for their kind words.

Charles, through your work you have made an immense contribution to the built environment. Your buildings have brought timeless elegance to societies in the East and the West. Your inspirational use of their many languages of design will speak powerfully to many generations hence. I would also like to sincerely thank you for your contribution over many years to the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, as a member of five different Steering Committees, a Master Jury and as an Award winner yourself in 1998.

Jim Wolfensohn, you have changed the very nature of the World Bank, creating an ethic that recognizes that the development of individuals and communities are as important as return on equity.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world, faceless and desperate in their poverty, may not know, but should know, that you have seen their plight and have heard and understood their needs.

You have been successful in harmonising the activities of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which has made both more effective in achieving their respective goals. And you have been an ecumenical leader in building bridges between and among faith-based organizations and recognising their importance in international development.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your presence here this evening.

And thank you to the National Building Museum for honouring me with this recognition. I am humbled to receive an award carrying the distinguished name of Vincent Scully. His work as a teacher and critic has reminded the world of the importance of a humane architecture that both respects the past and embraces the future.

I might add that my only regret, as a Harvard man, was that Mr. Scully chose to do so much of his work at Yale.

Ladies and gentlemen, some 30 years I began to question why architecture in the modern Islamic world seemed to have lost touch with the great achievements of its past.

I began working with leading architects, philosophers, artists, teachers, historians and thinkers -- from all religious faiths -- to establish an Award for Architecture. We sought to reshape and reposition knowledge and taste in the public psyche and to change the behaviour of the vast range of actors who shape the built environment.

Now some 28 years later, the extent to which we have been successful is due to a multitude of individuals and organisations from all regions, faiths and occupations. They have been cemented together by their mutual commitment of service to people through the contribution of time, talent and knowledge.

It is on behalf of this broad spectrum of qualified men and women that I accept the Vincent Scully Award this evening.

These include members of the nine Award Steering Committees and Master Juries. From the beginning, they pushed the notion of architecture far beyond the act of building and technical perfection. They were concerned with quality of life, social justice, pluralism, cross-cultural exchange, education, the proper use of resources and corporate responsibility.

Thank you to William Porter, former Dean of MIT's School of Architecture, for a persistent advocacy of community responsibility and to Ukrainian Oleg Grabar, from Harvard and Dogan Kuban, from Istanbul, who brought depth to the Award's understanding of the traditions of Islamic Architecture.

Thank you Nader Ardalan for pioneering climatically relevant and socially meaningful modern architecture. Hasan Uddin Khan helped us communicate with the architectural community by establishing the architectural magazine Mimar, a publication still much missed today.

Robert Venturi helped the Award address popular expressions in architecture. Frank Gehry has been an adamant supporter of social responsibility. Peter Eisenman and Charles Jencks helped us involve younger talent and fresh ideas as did Glenn Lowry from the Museum of Modern Art of New York. Renata Holod of the USA and Canada and of Ukrainian origin, helped us build the foundation of Award procedures, seminars and field visits. Saïd Zulficar, Secretary General of the Award from 1981 to 1990, helped to further refine our procedures, and to deepen the Award's interest and presence in contemporary societies where Islam had historically been at the forefront of architecture and learning. Suha Özkan now the longest serving Secretary General of the Award, has helped us gain momentum for the future.

Some who contributed are no longer with us. The late Professor Charles Moore, brought a real understanding of plurality in contemporary architecture and Hassan Fathy, made an enormous contribution with his advocacy of appropriate building traditions. The late Sir Hugh Casson moulded contemporary architectural expressions from Islamic heritage.

The many other architects, planners and thinkers who contributed are a pluralist microcosm of the world itself. And here is just a partial list: Kenzo Tange, Fumihiko Maki and Arata Isozaki of Japan, James Stirling of the United Kingdom and Zaha Hadid of the UK and Iraq, Kenneth Frampton of the UK and USA, Balkrishna Doshi of India, Moshen Mostafavi of Iran and the USA and Farshid Moussavi of Iran and the UK, Elias Torres Tur of Spain, Glenn Murcutt of Australia, Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, Geoffrey Bawa of Sri Lanka, Alvaro Siza of Portugal, Jacques Herzog of Switzerland and Billie Tsien of the US. And there are many more.

I know of no process where so many people of such different backgrounds have come together to improve the living conditions of more than one billion people.

Thank you to the more than 1000 nominators worldwide who have brought such a diversity of projects to our attention. Thanks also to the dozens of highly-qualified reviewers who conducted the in-depth analysis of short-listed projects to enable the judges to assess them impartially.

Finally, my most heartfelt thanks go to the thousands of architects, builders, designers, financiers and planners who had the inspiration, creativity, and most of all, the patience and determination, to bring so many worthwhile projects to completion.

There were 2,261 such projects in 88 countries that made our short lists over the last 27 years.

They are the living proof that the built environment can truly be what we want it to be.

Thank you.

## **Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Ninth Award Cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture New Delhi, 27 November 2004**

Prime Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here in Delhi this evening to recognise the winners of the ninth cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. We are particularly honoured by the presence of the Prime Minister whose leadership and ideas have contributed so much to improving the quality of life and economic well-being of the citizens of India.

I would also like to thank the departments and agencies of the Indian government who have been so supportive in mounting the Award events in India, and in facilitating the presence of so many people from different parts of the world. Many of our international guests have prominent and responsible positions at home and their presence here honours us.

The recognition we are giving tonight carries the name Award for Architecture. But it represents much more. The Award recognises the efforts of architects and their clients, builders - large and small, governments, planners, international organisations, granting agencies, village organisations and individuals. All of them are collectively responsible for the creation of a humane and socially-supportive built environment that is so important to our quality of life.

It is therefore most appropriate that this event is taking place in India, a country rich in cultural heritage and pluralistic traditions. Here, many cultures have maintained their distinct identities while combining and co-operating to create something even greater, the dynamic and vibrant India of the modern world. This is also a country where the struggle for social justice and improved quality of life has made tremendous strides over many decades through the continuous efforts of governments and civil society.

This year's Award recognises projects that cover the entire spectrum of human capability and human need. The striking differences in these award winners reflect the enormous range of need for human habitat that must be met in the world today.

It is now 27 years since the Award was launched. At that time, I was becoming increasingly disturbed by the loss of cultural identity and appropriateness in the architecture and built environments of much of the Muslim world. A few centuries ago, architecture was one of the great forms of artistic expression in the many diverse Muslim societies.

It permeated all types of buildings and spaces, both secular and religious, rural and urban, in the multiple Islamic cultures spread across the world and in neighbouring non-Muslim societies as well.

This magnificent structure, built to honour the second Mughal Emperor, Humayun, is one of the early examples of the spectacular architectural legacy the Mughals left to the people of the subcontinent. The Taj Mahal, built almost a hundred years later, is one of the world's most admired buildings of all time. Before these, the early Muslims had already made their distinctive architectural mark in Syria, Iraq, Fatimid Egypt, Spain, Persia and Anatolia.

But in recent years, Islamic architecture seemed to have lost its identity -- I should perhaps say identities -- and its inspiration. Occasionally, construction tended to repeat previous Islamic styles, but much more often, it simply absorbed imported architectural forms, language and materials.

There were several reasons for this. In part, it was because "modernity," equated with all that was Western, had come to be seen as representing improved quality. And most Muslim architects were trained in western schools and had little knowledge and understanding of the traditions of Islamic architecture.

The net result was that our cities, villages, and rural areas were being transformed by the insidious introduction and expansion of inappropriate and irrelevant architecture and planning.

In Islam, the Holy Koran says that man is God's noblest creation to whom He has entrusted the stewardship of all that is on earth. Each generation must leave for its successors an enhanced and sustainable social and physical environment. I am sure every responsible citizen in every part of the world would share this aspiration.

Therefore, we set out on a long journey to try to understand the causes of this sad situation which Muslim and non-Muslim architects alike recognised as unfortunate, but which none knew how to alter. They included some of the most eminent architects, and men and women of different disciplines and cultures who joined me in this endeavour to understand the causes of this decline in quality and design.

The enormity of the challenge caused many to doubt that a significant result could be achieved. It seemed certain that decades would pass before results, if any, would be seen.

The evolution of the Award has been first, engaging constituencies to develop consensus about the nature of the problem; second, developing the means to support change; and finally, exposing solutions to the many who are involved in the process of developing human habitat.

Now, as we enter our second quarter century of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, we might ask ourselves: Are the lessons we have learned in this particular cultural endeavour applicable to other environments and other cultural traditions that are stagnating or under threat?

I, of course, start with the basic assumption that the world is a much better place because it is pluralist and multi-cultural. Imagine what it would be like living in a world of no diversity, a world where we were all the same colour, shape and size, ate the same biryani, told the same jokes and combed our hair identically. Aside from the fact that my comb, sadly, serves less purpose these days, I would find a world like that quite boring!

I am therefore convinced that supporting diversity and cultures under threat is a worthwhile and fruitful venture.

This leads me to the fundamental question we sought to answer in establishing these awards. It is one which I think is applicable to any initiative which is aimed at nurturing and supporting cultures at risk: How do we protect the past and inspire the future?

Put another way, how do we reshape and reposition knowledge and taste and appreciation in the public psyche, and among those who play a role in developing human habitat?

From the beginning, we knew that to have a realistic chance of bringing about fundamental and lasting change, we had to reach out and raise awareness, not just among architects, but among clients, corporations, governments, planners, educators and financiers.

That meant we needed to build an all encompassing profile of people and habitat, not only in the Islamic world, but in countries where Muslims live and interact with other communities, both urban and rural.

We broadened the definition of architecture from one that tended to look only at individual structures, to one that encompassed entire neighbourhoods, including informal settlements, village communities and open public spaces. In the first nine cycles, some 2,661 projects have been assessed and documented in 88 countries, an unparalleled data resource base. The independent Master Juries have recognised 97 projects in 25 countries.

They demonstrate widely different aspects of architectural solutions that affect quality of life, ranging from the restoration of historic urban fabrics and monuments, to the reforestation of a

university campus of over 300 hectares. They have included generic models of individual houses and modest individual efforts, large civic complexes and high-tech, ultra-modern buildings that set new trends for the future.

Another important step in the process was to promote awareness and understanding of appropriate technologies and solutions. The Muslim world is multi-cultural, diverse in geography, terrain and climate and it exhibits extremes of wealth and poverty. This diversity required us to be sensitive not only to local needs, but to local capacity and resources available to meet those needs.

And finally, new initiatives outside the Award itself became necessary. In education, our Trust for Culture supports the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture at Harvard and M.I.T.

The Trust's Historic Cities Support Programme helps create new examples and models for reviving historic buildings and spaces.

Our efforts have been richly rewarded in the growth of knowledge and awareness of Islamic architecture and landscaping in educational bodies around the world. In the most eminent Western schools there is a much greater academic offering and commitment to the field of Islamic architecture.

And in Muslim countries we have seen the birth of new schools and a new generation of architectural teachers and scholars in the field. Most important, as we have seen from the winners recognised this evening, we are getting better habitat. I think that the Award and the cluster of initiatives born from it are truly protecting the past and inspiring the future.

But while we can be pleased with this progress, there is much more to be done.

Quality housing remains the most essential need for societies everywhere, both in rural and urban environments. Industrial facilities and workplaces are not at a level of excellence that makes them exceptional.

Rapidly-expanding urban centres throughout the world lack public parks and open urban spaces. Problems of transport, congestion and pollution have too few solutions emerging. The growth of slums, the consequence of the relentless forces of urbanisation, has not been stopped or even slowed down.

And although many fine examples of rural projects have been represented in past Award cycles, still there are not enough. We have much yet to strive for. But I believe the process we have launched has become a self-sustaining and unstoppable force for change in human habitat not only in the Muslim world, but in much of the developing world as well.

The larger and perhaps more interesting question is whether this approach might be adopted to support other cultures that are at risk.

The issues we have been attempting to address through the process of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture are not exclusive to the Muslim world.

The non-Muslim world struggles equally with explosive population growth, poverty, environmental degradation, exodus from rural areas, globalisation and the impact on cultural identity of new forms of media.

I hope that the lessons learned in the process we have established would be applicable to the many others in similar circumstances.

Perhaps these lessons will one day be seen as an important contribution from the Muslim world: A contribution to the broader cause of maintaining and enhancing a multi-cultural, pluralist world and a responsive, appropriate human habitat.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan**  
**Rede Seiner Hoheit des Aga Khans auf der Jahreskonferenz der deutschen**  
**Botschafter Berlin, 6. September 2004**

Herr Aussenminister Fischer, verehrte Ministerinnen und Minister, Botschafterinnen und Botschafter und Vertreter des diplomatischen Corps, verehrte Gäste, meine Damen und Herren.

Ich danke der Bundesregierung und Bundesaußenminister Fischer, dass sie mir die Ehre erweisen, vor hoch angesehenen Frauen und Männern sprechen zu dürfen, die über große Kenntnisse und tiefe Einblicke betreffend den Zustand der Welt verfügen. Sie sind in der Lage, die künftige Entwicklung der Welt in bessere Bahnen zu lenken.

Heute möchte ich über ein Thema sprechen, das über weite Strecken meines Arbeitslebens ein wichtiger Schwerpunkt war: die soziale, kulturelle und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in vielen der ärmsten Regionen der Welt. Ich werde insbesondere versuchen, meinen Beitrag zur Beantwortung folgender grundlegender Frage zu leisten: Welche Voraussetzungen müssen gegeben sein, um Entwicklungsländer in friedliche und produktive moderne Gesellschaften umzuwandeln?

Wenn ich die Eskalation der Spannungen in der Welt und insbesondere die schrecklichen Ereignisse der letzten Tage betrachte, bin ich mehr denn je davon überzeugt, dass durch kurzfristige Antworten, die inmitten einer Krise konzipiert werden, weder „friedliche“ noch „produktive“ moderne Gesellschaften geschaffen werden können. Ich möchte Ihnen heute darlegen, dass es grundlegende Fragen gibt, mit denen wir uns ständig und langfristig auseinandersetzen müssen, wenn wir das gewünschte Ergebnis erzielen wollen.

Ich betrachte diesen Komplex aus zwei Blickwinkeln: erstens als geistlicher Führer – Imam – der muslimischen Gemeinschaft der Schia Ismailiten. Wie die muslimische Ummah insgesamt sind die Ismailiten durch kulturelle Vielfalt geprägt. In über 25 Ländern auf dem ganzen Globus haben sie sich als Minderheit niedergelassen. Es gibt ismailitische Gemeinschaften in Süd- und Zentralasien, im Nahen Osten und in afrikanischen Ländern südlich der Sahara. In den letzten Jahrzehnten haben die Ismailiten durch Migration auch in Westeuropa und Nordamerika eine erhebliche Präsenz erreicht.

Zweitens vertrete ich diese Meinung als jemand, der sich seit über 45 Jahren für die menschliche und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in vielen der schwächsten Regionen der Welt einsetzt und dessen Wurzeln und institutionelle Verpflichtungen dort begründet sind.

Das Engagement des Imamat für die Entwicklungspolitik wird durch die Ethik des Islam bestimmt, die eine Brücke zwischen Glauben und Gesellschaft schlägt und das Fundament des von mir geschaffenen Aga-Khan-Entwicklungsnetzwerks, des so genannten AKDN, bildet. Seine mit der kulturellen, sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung befassten Einrichtungen wollen die Chancen und Lebensbedingungen der Schwächsten in der Gesellschaft verbessern, ungeachtet ihrer Herkunft, ihres Geschlechts oder ihres Glaubens. Wir arbeiten mit vielen Partnern zusammen, auch mit Vertretern nationaler und internationaler Institutionen.

Mehrere meiner heutigen Ausführungen beziehen sich auf die Entwicklungsländer im Allgemeinen. Die weitestreichenden Erfahrungen haben wir jedoch in Ländern gesammelt, in denen muslimische Gruppen einen erheblichen Anteil oder die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung stellen. Meine Äußerungen gelten daher insbesondere Themen, die sich auf die muslimische Welt einschließlich Afrikas, Asiens, des Nahen und des Mittleren Ostens beziehen.

Lassen Sie mich zunächst eine Passage aus der Rede von Bundesaußenminister Fischer auf der 40. Münchner Konferenz für Sicherheitspolitik im Februar dieses Jahres zitieren. Er stellte fest, dass die Förderung von Frieden und Sicherheit weit über ausschließliche Sicherheitsfragen hinausgehen müsse. Wörtlich sagte er: „Soziale und kulturelle Modernisierungsfragen sind, genauso wie die Fragen von Demokratie, Rechtsstaatlichkeit, Frauenrechten und guter Regierungsführung, von fast noch größerer Relevanz.“

Bundesminister Fischer bezog sich konkret auf die Behandlung des Terrorismusproblems. Ich stimme ihm in diesem Punkt zweifellos zu. Ich bin ferner der Auffassung, dass die von ihm angeschnittenen Themen den Entwicklungsländern Anlass zu großer und ständiger Sorge geben. Selbst in den Entwicklungsländern, in denen Terrorismus kein Thema ist, hängt die Verbesserung der Lebensqualität entscheidend von Fortschritten in den von ihm genannten Bereichen ab.

Heute möchte ich mich auf drei Grundvoraussetzungen konzentrieren, die meiner Meinung nach für den erfolgreichen Übergang der ärmsten Länder der Welt zu modernen, friedlichen Gesellschaften ausschlaggebend sind, nämlich:

- eine stabile und kompetente demokratische Regierungsführung;
- ein Umfeld, in dem der Pluralismus geachtet und gefördert wird;
- eine durch Vielfalt gekennzeichnete und engagierte Zivilgesellschaft.

Ich halte diese Elemente für die wichtigsten Bestandteile einer globalen Entwicklungspolitik. Sie verstärken sich nicht nur gegenseitig, sondern ermöglichen es sich entwickelnden Gesellschaften auch, den Prozess zu steuern und ihm letztlich Nachhaltigkeit zu verleihen.

Meiner Meinung nach müssen wir in diesen drei Bereichen gleichzeitig tätig sein. Wir dürfen aber nicht erwarten, dass sich die Fortschritte in jedem Bereich im gleichen Tempo vollziehen. Wir sollten auch nicht davon ausgehen, dass sie sich nacheinander vollziehen. Wir müssen auch Rückschläge und Misserfolge einkalkulieren. Dies erfordert den multilateralen Einsatz von Ressourcen zum Aufbau von Kapazitäten. Andernfalls leiden Millionen von Menschen, während wir auf Vollkommenheit warten.

Wenden wir uns zunächst der Demokratie zu.

In den 90-er Jahren kam der Begriff „scheiternder Staat“ auf; mit ihm wurde die Situation in Ländern wie Afghanistan, Bosnien, Liberia und Somalia beschrieben. Heutzutage lenken solche Beschreibungen lediglich von den tatsächlichen Problemen ab. Denn neben Massenvernichtungswaffen, HIV/Aids und dem Klimawandel stellen heute weltweit nicht scheiternde Staaten – Staaten selbst scheitern nicht – die größte Bedrohung dar, sondern das Scheitern der Demokratie in fast vierzig Prozent der Mitgliedstaaten der Vereinten Nationen. Dieses Scheitern ist in einem Großteil der muslimischen Länder, in Lateinamerika, Osteuropa und Afrika zu beobachten.

Bei meinen Besuchen in afrikanischen Ländern wie Mali und Uganda, in Ländern des Nahen Ostens wie Syrien und in asiatischen Staaten wie Kirgisistan und Pakistan haben die führenden Politiker mir gegenüber ihre tiefe Sorge und ihre Enttäuschung über das Scheitern der Demokratie und die sich daraus ergebende Unfähigkeit zum Ausdruck gebracht, Regierungen einzusetzen, die den Erwartungen ihrer Völker gerecht werden können. Sie würden Unterstützung bei Bildungsmaßnahmen im Bereich Demokratie begrüßen.

Leider beobachten wir heute in immer mehr Entwicklungsländern, in denen Parlamentswahlen Tradition haben, eine Aufspaltung der nationalen politischen Parteien in Splittergruppen, die sich auf engstirnige Interessen gründen. Koalitionsregierungen werden von führenden Politikern zusammengeschustert, die wenig Erfahrung im Umgang mit vielen Splittergruppen haben.

Wir brauchen uns nur die jüngere Geschichte Westeuropas vor Augen zu führen, um zu erkennen, welche Schwierigkeiten solche Koalitionsregierungen für eine effektive und demokratische Regierungsführung mit sich bringen können. Jahrelang wurde in einigen Ländern die Lebensdauer von Regierungen in Monaten gemessen. Die Herbeiführung eines Konsenses im Hinblick auf korrigierende verfassungsrechtliche Änderungen und deren Umsetzung waren eine ebenso große Herausforderung.

Wie sinnvoll ist also die Überlegung, dass eine afrikanische Regierung, die plötzlich nach Jahren der Mehrheit einer einzigen Partei mit einer zersplitterten Koalition zurechtkommen



muss, in der Lage sein könnte, dieses Problem mit einer solchen Reife zu lösen, dass es die Erwartungen seines Volkes hinsichtlich eines besseren Lebens erfüllen kann?

Wichtig ist folgende Erkenntnis: Die Demokratie ist ein zerbrechliches Gebilde. Sie kann jederzeit in jeder Gesellschaft scheitern. Die Erfahrungen Europas in den letzten fünfzig Jahren sollten uns auch eine andere traurige Binsenwahrheit deutlich vor Augen führen. Wahlen und die Existenz politischer Parteien sind als solche noch lange kein Garant für stabile Regierungen, eine kompetente politische Führung und die Achtung der Verfassung. Sie sind auch kein Garant für eine gute Wirtschaftsführung und nicht vorhandene Korruption.

Angesichts dessen, dass diese Erfahrung an der Geburtsstätte der Demokratie gemacht wurde, bitte ich Sie eindringlich, demokratische Experimente im Nahen Osten und in den Entwicklungsländern im Allgemeinen geduldig zu unterstützen.

Zuweilen lese ich, der Islam stehe im Widerspruch zur Demokratie. Ich muss Ihnen jedoch sagen, dass ich als Muslim nicht wegen des Denkens der Griechen oder Franzosen, sondern wegen Grundsätzen Demokrat bin, die 1400 Jahre zurückreichen, direkt in die Zeit nach dem Tod des Propheten Mohammed (der Friede sei mit ihm).

Damals diskutierten die Muslime darüber, wie die von ihm für die Übernahme einer Führungsrolle festgelegten Bedingungen am besten zu erfüllen seien. Das Prinzip einer umfassenden Befragung der Öffentlichkeit bei der Auswahl von Führungspersönlichkeiten in Angelegenheiten, die sich auf die staatliche und die zivile Verwaltung beziehen, wurde von Gruppen festgelegt, die sich zur sunnitischen Strömung zusammenschlossen. Das parallele Prinzip der auf direkte Nachkommen übergehenden Führungsrolle wurde von der Schia beibehalten. Die Muslime der damaligen Zeit legten ferner fest, dass Führungspersönlichkeiten nach Verdiensten und Kompetenzen auszuwählen seien. Diese vor 14 Jahrhunderten verankerten Prinzipien sind mit den demokratischen Modellen vereinbar, die es in der Welt von heute gibt.

Eine flüchtige Analyse der Landkarte des Nahen und Mittleren Ostens zeigt, dass in den nächsten Jahrzehnten höchstwahrscheinlich mehrere demokratische Regierungsformen erprobt werden dürften. Einige Staaten werden die republikanische Demokratie erproben, einige die konstitutionelle Monarchie und wiederum andere verschiedene Formen eines theokratischen Systems.

Es ist nicht möglich, das Ergebnis oder Tempo des Wandels vorherzusagen. Mit einiger Gewissheit können wir jedoch prognostizieren, dass das Kaleidoskop der sich verändernden Strukturen von internen Kräften bestimmt wird, wie dies bereits im Irak und in Afghanistan veranschaulicht wurde.

Ich persönlich sehe kein anderes Szenario angesichts der Vielzahl der Akteure und der unabdingbaren Notwendigkeit, dass alle konsultiert werden müssen, wenn ein Konsens herbeigeführt und gewahrt werden soll.

Daher bin ich der festen Überzeugung, dass diese indigenen Elemente genährt und unterstützt werden müssen. Wir müssen sicherstellen, dass sie solide Kenntnisse über die Elemente besitzen, welche die Demokratie und ihre Institutionen tragen bzw. schwächen.

Jede Entwicklungsstrategie muss daher Bildungsmaßnahmen und Unterstützung für die Entwicklung eines umfassenden Verständnisses der Institutionen und Abläufe einer konstitutionellen Demokratie beinhalten. Die formale Bildung, die auf der Ebene der Sekundarschulen einsetzt, kann hierbei eine Rolle spielen. Dies gilt aber auch für Programme wie den Austausch von Parlamentarierarbeitsgruppen, Gesetzgebungsexperten, hohen Regierungsbeamten und der Vielzahl von Akteuren der Zivilgesellschaft, einschließlich Journalisten, Pädagogen und Juristen. Wir müssen bestrebt sein, sowohl in der Theorie als auch in der Praxis ein breites und tiefes Verständnis für die demokratische Kultur zu entwickeln.

Wenden wir uns nun der Frage des Pluralismus zu.

Wir alle haben erlebt, wie die Nichtbeachtung, oder schlimmer noch, Ablehnung des Pluralismus weltweit zu zerstörerischen Konflikten geführt hat, die zahlreiche Kulturen, Rassen, Nationalitäten und Religionen in Mitleidenschaft gezogen haben. Traurigerweise erfuhren diese Erkenntnisse in dramatischer Weise eine Bestätigung durch die Ereignisse in so unterschiedlichen Ländern wie Afghanistan, Tadschikistan, Ruanda und der Demokratischen Republik Kongo. Sie machen deutlich, von welcher grundlegenden Bedeutung es ist, dass in den Entwicklungsländern beim Aufbau der Demokratie der Schaffung und der Legitimierung des Pluralismus absoluter Vorrang gegeben wird.

Pluralistische Gesellschaften entstehen nicht zufällig von selbst in der Geschichte. Sie sind das Ergebnis einer aufgeklärten Bildungspolitik und des fortgesetzten Einsatzes der Regierung und aller Kräfte der Zivilgesellschaft für die Förderung und die Anerkennung eines der größten Werte der Menschheit - der Vielfalt ihrer Völker.

Ist es daher nicht Aufgabe einer aufgeklärten Regierung, wo auch immer in der Welt, zu gewährleisten, dass Pluralismus und die Erziehung zu Pluralismus auf jeder Agenda globaler Prioritäten einen zentralen Platz einnehmen?

Und doch vermitteln die Lehrpläne in westlichen Ländern und in Entwicklungsländern selten den jungen Menschen ein umfassendes Verständnis ihrer eigenen Kulturen, geschweige denn der religiösen, linguistischen, sozialen und künstlerischen Kräfte der sie umgebenden Gemeinschaften. Diese Erkenntnisse haben die Schulen des Aga-Khan-Entwicklungsnetzwerkes des Primär- und Sekundarbereichs und insbesondere sein neues Netzwerk akademischer Elitezentren – die Aga-Khan-Akademien – dazu gebracht, Lehrpläne zu erproben, die eine pluralistische Sicht der Welt vermitteln. Diese beruht auf Unterschieden im Aussehen, der Volkszugehörigkeit, der Religion und der Kultur. Sie werden von der Zusammenarbeit mit einigen der führenden internationalen Schulen, darunter auch Salem in Deutschland, profitieren, die unsere Partner in einer Internationalen Akademischen Partnerschaft sind.

Ich bin zutiefst davon überzeugt, dass es die jüdisch-christliche Welt für ein hoffnungsloses Unterfangen halten wird, zu versuchen, die Fragen der Demokratie, der Zivilgesellschaft und des Pluralismus in der muslimischen Welt zu lösen, wenn nicht von der jüdisch-christlichen Welt eine große Anstrengung – und ich meine eine wirklich große Anstrengung –gemacht wird, um ein tiefer gehendes und umfassenderes grundlegendes Wissen über die muslimischen Zivilisationen zu erlangen. Dies ist ein erster Schritt in Richtung Dialog und Verständigung.

Es wird eine systematische Anstrengung über mehrere Jahrzehnte sein müssen, um erfolgreich zu sein. Sie muss ein breites Spektrum von Schülern im Sekundarbereich erreichen und darf nicht auf das Fachwissen, das im Rahmen der Hochschulbildung erlangt wird, beschränkt sein, wie dies heute der Fall ist.

Als Muslim akzeptiere ich, dass eine so umfassende Anstrengung voraussichtlich abweisende Reaktionen einer Vielzahl von Kräften in der jüdisch-christlichen Welt hervorrufen wird.

Die Beziehungen zwischen dieser Welt und der Welt des Islam sind in der Geschichte durch die Haltung gegenüber den anderen Religionen bestimmt worden. Sie wurden in der Zeit der Kreuzzüge auf anschauliche und brutale Weise illustriert. Später ging es vor allem um die Frage, welcher Glaube besser geeignet sei, die Seele des Einzelnen zu erlösen. Bekehrertum war vermutlich die einzige starke Antriebskraft.

In den letzten Jahrzehnten ist in zahlreichen Ländern ein interreligiöser Dialog aufgenommen worden. Leider wird jedes Mal, wenn der Begriff „Glauben“ in einem solchen Zusammenhang verwendet wird, automatisch angenommen, dass die Frage des Bekehrertums unterschwellig mitschwingt. Doch Glaube ist letztendlich nur ein Aspekt der menschlichen Gesellschaft.

Daher müssen wir heute diese Frage unter dem Aspekt der Kulturen sehen, die übereinander etwas lernen und miteinander sprechen, und nicht allein unter dem eingeschränkteren Blickwinkel der interreligiösen Dialektik.

Ein solcher Ansatz wäre auch für die muslimische Welt äußerst nutzbringend. Er würde dazu führen, größeren Nachdruck auf das Kennenlernen des Pluralismus und des Reichtums der eigenen Geschichte sowie der Vielfalt der Länder, Kulturen, religiösen Institutionen und Interpretationen des Islam zu legen. Das Lernen darf nicht, wie es oft der Fall ist, auf die theologischen Fragen beschränkt bleiben.

Auch heute noch führen theologische Interpretationen und Bekehrertum dazu, in der christlichen Welt zwischen katholischen, orthodoxen und protestantischen Interpretationen zu unterscheiden, ebenso wie in der islamischen Welt zwischen Interpretationen der Sunniten und der Schia und ihren zahlreichen Untergruppierungen.

Ich würde mir wünschen, den Tag erleben zu dürfen, an dem die Definition einer gebildeten Person in der jüdisch-christlichen Kultur ein intelligentes Verständnis der muslimischen Welt beinhalten würde. Diese Person würde die herausragende Position der islamischen Zivilisationen im menschlichen Denken und Wissen würdigen können. Dies würde auch ein Verständnis ihrer Forschungstradition und Errungenschaften, von Philosophie und den Schönen Künsten bis hin zu Wissenschaft, Architektur und Ingenieurwesen, einschließen.

Das gegenwärtige Fehlen von Kenntnissen macht es unmöglich, einen Dialog zu begründen, da man keinen Dialog auf der Grundlage von Unkenntnis führen kann. Mit wem sollte man einen Dialog führen? Ohne einen fruchtbaren Dialog kann man keine kohärente und nachhaltige Außenpolitik verfolgen, da man nicht in der Lage sein wird, Dinge vorherzusehen. Man wird die Kräfte, die im Spiel sind, nicht verstehen.

Wie wäre man umgegangen mit der Lage in Kaschmir, Afghanistan, Irak und dem Mittleren Osten im weiteren Sinne oder den Philippinen, wenn die Hauptakteure eine umfassende Kenntnis der Geschichte und der Kultur jener Gegenden besessen hätten?

Wenden wir uns nun der Zivilgesellschaft zu. Keine der Initiativen, die ich erwähnt habe, kann erfolgreich sein, wenn es keine starke Zivilgesellschaft gibt, die für die Unterstützung von Pluralismus und letztendlich effizienten Demokratien von entscheidender Bedeutung ist.

Zur Zivilgesellschaft gehören Wohltätigkeitsorganisationen und nichtstaatliche Organisationen. Aber das ist nicht alles. Zu ihr gehören auch Organisationen, die mit der Professionalisierung bewährter Methoden betraut sind, wie Juristenvereinigungen, Buchhalterverbände, Ärzte, Krankenschwestern und Ingenieure. Die Zivilgesellschaft umfasst auch Handelskammern, Gewerkschaften und Journalistenvereinigungen. Organisationen auf Dorfebene, Frauengruppen, Kleinstkreditinstitute, landwirtschaftliche Kooperativen sind ebenfalls wichtige Bestandteile.

Die Zivilgesellschaft leistet einen gewaltigen Beitrag zur menschlichen Entwicklung, da sie die Lücken zwischen Regierung, Wirtschaft und Familie ausfüllt. Sie übernimmt die Dinge, die der Staat nicht übernehmen kann, und unterstützt somit die Bürger beim Aufbau der Nation.

Das Wichtigste ist jedoch, dass die Zivilgesellschaft den menschlichen Fortschritt garantiert. Sie dient als Stabilisator oder Pfeiler in Zeiten wirtschaftlicher Schwäche oder sozialen Stresses. Wenn Demokratien scheitern oder gescheitert sind, sind es die Institutionen der Zivilgesellschaft, die eine zusätzliche Last übernehmen können, um dazu beizutragen, Verbesserungen in der Lebensqualität zu erhalten.

In seiner Münchener Rede unterstrich Bundesminister Fischer die Bedeutung von Partnerschaften bei der Schaffung der indigenen Fähigkeit der Zivilgesellschaft in Entwicklungsländern.

Ich begrüße das Prinzip der Partnerschaften von ganzem Herzen. Die Institutionen der Zivilgesellschaft in Entwicklungsländern benötigen die Unterstützung von Fachleuten, wenn sie das Bollwerk demokratischer Prozesse sein und einen Beitrag dazu leisten sollen, den

Menschen zu helfen, ihre Lebensbedingungen zu verbessern. Partnerschaften können vielfältige Formen haben. Es gibt Partnerschaften zwischen Institutionen, Unterstützung durch Experten in Bildungs- und Gesundheitswesen und die Gewährleistung ständiger Weiterbildung für Menschen vor Ort in Bereichen wie Krankenpflege, Journalismus, im Wohltätigkeitssektor und bei gemeinnützigen Aktivitäten.

Deutschland und das AKDN arbeiten bereits umfassend und in immer stärkerem Maße in gefährlichen und schwierigen Gegenden wie Pakistan, Afghanistan und Mittelasien zusammen. Über eine Vielzahl von Organisationen auf Dorf- und Gemeindeebene ermutigen wir die Menschen, ihre Antagonismen zu überwinden und zusammenzuarbeiten, um Lösungen für gemeinsame Probleme in ihrem Streben nach einem besseren Leben zu finden.

Nordpakistan ist ein exzellentes Beispiel dafür, wie diese Unterstützung der Zivilgesellschaft und des Pluralismus die Demokratie stärken kann. Wir arbeiten in dieser abgeschiedenen Region seit mehr als 20 Jahren, seit 1992 mit deutscher Unterstützung. Etwa 3.900 Organisationen auf Dorfebene sind geschaffen worden, die sich mit einer breiten Palette von Fragen, die von Fraueninitiativen über die Wassernutzung bis hin zu Sparen und Krediten reichen, befassen. Das wirtschaftliche Wachstum dort ist beeindruckend, und an die Stelle der Feindseligkeiten, die aus der Verzweiflung heraus entstanden, trat Zusammenarbeit und Hoffnung auf eine bessere Zukunft. Bei den letzten Kommunalwahlen schnitten die Leiter dieser Gemeinschaften von all denen, die gewählte Ämter anstrebten und erhielten, am besten ab. Die Lektion, die wir daraus ziehen können, ist, dass die Demokratie auch in den entlegensten ländlichen Gegenden funktionieren kann, auf die sich ein Großteil unserer Haupttätigkeit konzentriert, wenn man geduldig ist und daran arbeitet, bei den Einwohnern eigene Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln.

Das AKDN hat begonnen, seine Unterstützung für Demokratie, Pluralismus und Zivilgesellschaft durch die Gründung eines Globalen Zentrums für Pluralismus in Ottawa zu formalisieren. Dieses Bildungs- und Forschungszentrum wird eng mit Regierungen, Hochschulen und der Zivilgesellschaft zusammenarbeiten, um rechtliche Rahmenstrukturen und Politiken zu unterstützen, die die Fähigkeit der lokalen Bevölkerung stärken, den Pluralismus zu fördern. Wir würden eine Beteiligung der Bundesregierung bei dem Bemühen, die Früchte dieser Arbeit in die Entwicklungsländer zu tragen, begrüßen.

Meine Damen und Herren, ich bin unendlich dankbar für die Zusammenarbeit zwischen dem AKDN und den deutschen Entwicklungshilfeinstitutionen. Sie zeigt den Umfang der Partnerschaft zwischen dem Westen und den Entwicklungsländern, insbesondere der muslimischen Welt. Ich möchte meiner Hoffnung und meiner Überzeugung Ausdruck verleihen, dass unsere Partnerschaft fortgesetzt werden und von der Bereitschaft gekennzeichnet sein wird, innovativ zu sein, Risiken im Gegenzug für eine große Belohnung einzugehen, und die Geduld und Entschlossenheit für den langfristigen Einsatz, der erforderlich ist, aufzubringen.

Ich habe versucht, Ihnen die Lehren, die aus den besonderen Erfahrungen des AKDN und unserer Partner in Asien, Afrika und im Nahen und Mittleren Osten in der Entwicklungshilfe gezogen werden können, darzulegen.

Sie alle, die Sie hier versammelt sind, können die künftige Entwicklung der Welt in positiv mitgestalten. Jeder Einzelne von Ihnen möge in seiner Rolle als Botschafter darüber nachdenken, wie die Fragen, die ich genannt habe, dazu beitragen können, in strategischer Weise das Kaleidoskop der sich verändernden Strukturen in den Regionen und Verantwortungsbereichen, in denen Sie arbeiten, zu verändern.

Ist die Förderung der Demokratie ein ernsthaftes Anliegen in unserem Bestreben, die Entwicklungsländer in friedliche und produktive moderne Gesellschaften umzuwandeln? Wie können wir das Wachstum der Zivilgesellschaft nähren und fördern? Welche bildungspolitischen und kulturellen Ansätze können zu größerem Pluralismus, zu Verständnis und Dialog führen?

Und abschließend: Können wir, wenn wir auf diese Fragen antworten, die Gefahren verringern und die Chancen auf Erfolg bei der Unterstützung der Menschen in den Entwicklungsländern in ihrem Streben nach einem besseren Leben erhöhen?

Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit.

## **Speech of His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy, Maputo, 25 June 2004**

Your Excellency President Chissano  
Your Excellency the President of the Assembly  
Your Excellency the Prime Minister  
Honourable Ministers  
Honourable Mayor  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

What event could express a greater aspiration than laying the foundation of a school that hopes to inspire its students to explore horizons beyond their own, develop their mental resilience and discover the bonds of mutuality that cut across differences of culture, ethnicity, religion or background?

I am, therefore, most happy and grateful that His Excellency President Chissano has accepted our invitation to lay the foundation stone of the Aga Khan Academy, Maputo, here in the city of Matola.

Your Excellency, you have been a most staunch supporter of the Academy and of the spirit behind its concept. Your presence with us today is, therefore, a source of great happiness to everyone associated with the Aga Khan Academies and what they aspire to achieve in the service of society.

I also welcome the presence of the Hon. Mrs. Luisa Diogo, Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and Finance, and her cabinet colleagues, the Hon. Dr. Leonardo Simao, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Hon. Mr. Alcidio Nguenha, Minister for Education. I am also grateful to the Hon. Carlos Tembe, Mayor of Matola, for his presence here today.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge your vital support and consistent encouragement. The Aga Khan Development Network and I are also most grateful to the Government of Mozambique for its continued collaboration in the planning and development of the Academy.

For me, it is a special honour and pleasure to be in Mozambique at the time of her Independence anniversary celebrations. On this occasion, I extend my good wishes and heartiest congratulations to the people of Mozambique with whom the Ismaili Imamat and Community enjoy a long history of warmth and friendship. Our shared history goes back many decades to the middle years of the 19th century when Ismaili Muslims first began to settle along the eastern coast of Africa.

This continent has experienced a painful history of crises and conflicts. Mozambique herself has had her own share of trauma from which the country emerged, twelve years ago, united in determination to apply her reserves of energy and creativity to the challenge of reconstruction. Indeed, under President Chissano's leadership, Mozambique is seen as one of the most open-minded, pragmatic and wisely-guided models of post-conflict reconstruction in the world.

This pragmatism and open-mindedness underlines the importance of specialist expertise in approaching the challenges of development. Post-colonial national economic and political philosophies, often linked to the Cold War, sought to indoctrinate, rather than educate, just as much in the former Soviet Union as in many developing countries of Africa and Asia.

The developing world now increasingly recognises that there are areas of national life, particularly economics and education, which require the dedicated leadership of professional specialists who are not burdened by the baggage of dogma. The economic challenges now faced by the former Soviet Union, and many developing countries, are a salutary warning against entrusting the direction of national economies to political ideologues rather than to professional economists.

After Independence, education in the developing world was often used to seek to foster a greater sense of national identity, with a particular tendency to focus on the promotion of national languages. But when this turned exclusionary, the resulting insularity became a severe handicap. How can one educate students for a global environment in a language that has no international reach? Lessons have been learned. Today, whilst the use of national languages has, in many cases, been retained at the primary level, increasingly, educational systems in developing countries provide for the teaching and use of English at the secondary and higher levels, so that students are able to access the world and its opportunities.

The triumph of pragmatism and professional expertise over ideology is now an accepted wisdom in the realm of education. A lifelong and necessary experience, education is, by common consensus, a powerful driving force in any strategy for national development.

Yet, given insufficient national resources and the vagaries of aid-flows, quality education remains a daunting challenge for most developing countries. Large class sizes, and the poor quality of teaching in schools, all too frequently reflect the loss of standards throughout national education systems including, in particular, in universities.

Fortunately, governments everywhere are now beginning to appreciate the contribution of not-for-profit private providers of social services to address the challenges of rising expectations that compound historically unmet needs. In this context, international partnerships in education are increasingly seen as vehicles for introducing best practices, tried and tested. Such partnerships also expand the pool of much needed resources to invest in quality, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels, so that educational institutions are able to form the best minds in their own countries.

The conviction that home-grown intellectual leadership of exceptional calibre is the best driver of a society's destiny, underpins the Ismaili Imam's endeavour to create catalytic centres of educational excellence. The first of these opened last December in Mombasa, Kenya. The Aga Khan Academy in Maputo will be the second in a planned network of what I hope will be residential schools of the highest international standards, from primary through higher secondary education. In due course other academies will be located not only in Kenya and Mozambique but also in Tanzania, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mali - and India, Pakistan, Bangladesh - and Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - and Syria.

Adopting internationally proven but flexible curriculum frameworks, the residential schools will evolve over time into an integrated system through which advanced students and faculty will be required to study at other campuses, and to be exposed to different social, ethnic and cultural environments. Students will specialise in the fields of knowledge most required for the development of their own and their neighbouring societies, within the context of a broad and meaningful education. This will embrace the sciences and the humanities, including music and art, while the teaching of history and world civilisations will seek to portray, in a more balanced and comprehensive way, the world's heritage. For example, the humanities programme will include a study of Muslim civilisations, all too often misrepresented or ignored, especially in the industrialised world. Corresponding to this global reach, the curriculum will include mastery of more than one language so that, while English will be the medium of instruction, the students will be encouraged to be bilingual, and perhaps trilingual. They will also excel in the use of modern information technologies to enable them to access the world's most sophisticated knowledge bases.

But above all, it is my hope that these schools will stimulate creativity, intellectual curiosity and honest inquiry so that their students can adapt and thrive in a world of rapid change; can make informed judgements on life's daily challenges, and place those judgements in an ethical framework.

The intellectual and moral quality of the Academies will therefore depend, not only on their curriculum design, but on the quality and dedication of their teachers. Teachers, in turn, must have the support of parents, school leaders and society itself. A major goal of the Academies is therefore to restore the public standing of the teaching profession so that future generations

of educated men and women come to see in teaching a great, valid and rewarding opportunity in life. To sustain creative teachers in their desire for continuing self-improvement, the Academies will have in-built provisions to foster teacher development in association with the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development.

Committed to excellence, the Academies will only admit students on the basis of their merit, that is, their intellectual promise, evidence of character, and capability and desire to learn. The schools must – and will - therefore have the capacity to select students without regard to the ability of their families to pay the school fees.

The buildings and spaces of the Academies will seek to provide an aesthetically well conceived environment conducive to reflection, study and enjoyment within an appropriate cultural context.

No school can thrive in isolation. Over time, these Academies will become resources one for another, and, through the Aga Khan Development Network, benefit from the intellectual and programmatic resources of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia. In addition, the Academies will have access to the experience and curricular resources of such leading international schools as Philips Academy in the United States and Salem in Germany which are associated with institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network in an International Academic Partnership.

Among history's great truths is that a society is only able to advance to newer horizons of greater promise when it overcomes insularity, and recognises strength in difference. Despite, therefore, the tensions and conflicts, which riddle our planet, the effective world of the future is one of pluralism, a world that comprehends, accepts and builds on diversity. The Academy in Maputo, like its counterparts elsewhere, will seek to demonstrate the instrumental role that education can and must play in building strong civil societies across the developing world. It is institutions such as the one whose foundations we are laying today that will be a driving force for progress and betterment around the world.

The education that the Academies will offer will make the case for a pluralist worldview. It is one which values differences of outlook, ethnicity, and religion and culture, yes in the interest of justice and fairness, but also because a temperament receptive to pluralism helps creativity, curiosity and inquiry, to thrive in sharing the best of human knowledge and talent from whatever individual, or group, it originates.

A thousand years ago, my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. In the Islamic tradition, they viewed the discovery of knowledge as a way to understand, so as to serve better God's creation, to apply knowledge and reason to build society and shape human aspirations.

The Academies are, therefore, a continuing articulation of this vision, a statement of great hope in the power of good education, and an investment in the development of the best minds who will enable future generations to take charge of their own destinies.



**Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Convocation of the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Toronto, Canada)  
18 June 2004**

Chancellor Poy,  
President Birgeneau,  
Dean Gaskell,  
Members of the Governing Council,  
Faculty,  
Students and Parents,  
Fellow Graduates,

I thank you for your warm welcome, and am deeply moved by the honour that this renowned institution of learning has done of conferring upon me the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa. I accept this award with much happiness, but also a profound sense of humility, cognisant that many men and women, of higher distinction and more notable achievements, are also being recognised, joining an illustrious line of previous recipients.

But, above all, today's event belongs to you, the graduands of OISE, as you contemplate the nature of the world which awaits your engagement. From your choice of education as the area of knowledge of greatest interest to you, there are, at least, three questions which I assume you will apply to most of your future endeavours. First, what will future generations of educated people in Canada and around the world need to know to earn for themselves, and their families, honourable livelihoods? Secondly, what will future generations need to know to make our world a better place? And third, what can you, as Canadians, do to play an optimised world role?

In 1957, the year I became Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, the Nobel Peace Prize winner was a 60 year-old statesman who, two years earlier, in a book entitled *Democracy in World Politics*, had written:

" We are now emerging into an age when different civilisations will have to learn to live side by side in peaceful interchange, learning from each other, studying each other's history and ideals, art and culture, mutually enriching each other's lives. The only alternative in this overcrowded little world, is misunderstanding, tension, clash, and catastrophe."

The prescient writer, whom some of you will recognise as a distinguished alumnus and former teacher at this great institution, went on to lead this country as its fourteenth Prime Minister: Lester B. Pearson.

Four weeks ago, speaking at the Leadership and Diversity Conference in Ottawa, I noted that some 40% of the countries in the United Nations are failed democracies, and the U.N.'s own experience pointing to the general weak state of civil society in these countries as one of the major causes for this widespread failure. What is civil society? Why is it so essential to the good health of any modern state? And what is the role of education in shaping and enriching civil society?

The World Bank uses the term to refer to a wide array of organisations that have a presence in public life but are not affiliated to the state. They function on a not-for-profit basis to express the interests and values of their members and others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. In this sense, civil society organisations are multifarious: from community and indigenous groups through faith-based

and charitable organisations, to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labour unions, professional associations and foundations.

But there is a broader definition that holds that civil society embraces an even wider diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms that vary in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Besides the Bank's categories, these spaces are populated by such organisations as village and women's groups, neighbourhood self-help groups, social movements, business associations, microcredit organisations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

In an era of rising expectations and unmet needs, both in the developed, but much more in the developing world, civil society institutions play an essential role in the provision of social services, the protection of the marginalised and the delivery of development programmes. The positive action of these civil society initiatives is especially critical where governments are weak or non-performing, as in situations of failed democracies or post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction.

Whatever definition is used, a quality civil society is independent of government, pluralist and led by merit-based educated leadership. Not only does Canadian civil society eminently meet these three criteria of being non-governmental pluralist and merit-led, I know of no country where civil society is more empathetic with the needs of civil society of the countries of Africa and Asia in which I have been working for some 45 years. I have, therefore, asked myself, not once, but hundreds of times, if and how Canadian civil society can mobilise its resources more vigorously to help improve the quality of life of the peoples of Africa and Asia.

Asked in these terms, the issue is that of sharing the many forms of human knowledge and experience that create and then sustain a civil society of quality, rather than the massive injection of monetary resources. There are, however, two obvious pre-conditions: First, that the governments and peoples of the developing world wish for, and welcome, the help being offered. This requires an enabling social, legal and fiscal environment. Secondly, that Canadian institutions and human resources must see in their willingness to help, real enrichment in life's purpose.

Assuming these preconditions are met, you may ask how this wide civil society partnership for development can occur in practice. There are innumerable forms which have achieved genuine successes in the past. These include: the sharing of best practices, the twinning of institutions, quality improvement in delivery of healthcare and education, secondment of leadership such as school head teachers or university professors in specialised fields, strengthening civil society institutions in forward programming and performance measurement, continuing education for the most marginalised professions such as nursing or journalism, teaching best practice in the not-for-profit and charity field. The opportunities for partnership are many. But they are not being realised, or if they are, it is at a level infinitely below the needs, and dramatically below the potential for change.

This is the nature of the true regime change we need, where the civil society of the industrialised world gives wide and encompassing support to that of the developing world.

True regime change occurs when liberty is guaranteed by a people free to create or support institutions of their own choosing. True regime change occurs when that strength and that freedom are defined by the depth, breadth and quality of education shared across the

society in question.

Partnerships between the developed and developing worlds can and do work. Moreover, they demonstrate how essential universities and their lifeblood -- you their graduates -- are to civil society.

Today, in Pakistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tanzania, at the forefront of curricular change and new teaching technologies, are young men and women who, like yourselves, have studied at OISE. They are graduates of the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development, which was established with the help of the Universities of Toronto and Oxford. Today, also, the Aga Khan University is collaborating with international research institutions in the developed world in areas ranging from cancer and HIV/AIDS to cardiovascular disease, perinatal infection and hypertension. These collaborations, across national, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic boundaries are serving to find ways of preserving life.

At the nascent University of Central Asia, we are researching and addressing the challenges of mountain societies, drawing on a multiplicity of traditions to create stability and prosperity in remote yet geopolitically sensitive regions of the world -- preserving not just life, but societies, cultures and, perhaps, nations.

Today, you are graduating from one of Canada's greatest universities in a field of study that is of paramount importance. I am speaking to you as a person whose roots and institutional engagement are in the developing world; as a Muslim; as someone seeking to engage with, and improve, the lives of the millions of people who live in Asia and Africa.

It is against this background that I invite you -- indeed, I urge you -- to reflect deeply on the needs of our world today. I am sure you will wish to seize the opportunities for sharing your knowledge with future generations here in Canada, but should you wish it, the reach of your knowledge can go far beyond your shores, and will be deeply welcomed. Because civil society is so critical to the quality of life, and the pace of progress, and because it finds expression in so many pluralist forms and spaces, I am convinced that the future before you, in this global environment we share, offers you a remarkable spectrum of opportunities.

**Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Leadership and Diversity Conference Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, May 19, 2004**

Your Excellency the Governor General,  
Excellencies,  
Conference Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I thank Your Excellency for inviting me to share some thoughts in this closing session of the Leadership and Diversity Conference. On this occasion, I would also like to thank Your Excellency and the Government of Canada for the warm welcome and the kindness and courtesies that have been extended to me.

In the course of the conference proceedings, you have had the good fortune of listening to people of high eminence and erudition, from Canada and abroad. I therefore seek your indulgence and generosity as I speak to you with much humility and no little apprehension!

I have not accepted to speak today about Canadians and Canada, because you have just completed a wide number of visits to different parts of your lovely country, and, as Canadians, you know a great deal more about her than I do. Where I feel I may have something worthwhile to contribute to your discussions and reflections today deals with Canada and the developing world.

It is a joy and a privilege to address the young leaders of Canada who represent different walks of national life, as well as its social, cultural and regional diversity. I am particularly happy at this opportunity as you have been jointly exploring a critical aspect of the role of leadership: How the leadership—political and civil—can help sustain the moral and dynamic coherence in public life that Canada has so successfully constructed, predicated on the ethic of respect for human dignity. This coherence recognizes and builds on difference, enables a spirit of compromise and consensus in public and legislative policies, and marks out a healthy space for the role of civil society as a sound – indeed an essential - bulwark for democratic processes.

Canada has an experience of governance of which much of the world stands in dire need. It is a world of increasing dissension and conflict in which a significant contribution is the failure of different ethnic, tribal, religious, or social groups to search for, and agree upon, a common space for harmonious co-existence.

This situation of conflict and instability poses a grave risk for the future relationship between the industrialized world and the developing world. The polarizing and paralyzing Cold War, which impacted millions of people in the developing world, has gone. The new issue that demands the attention of the international community is the need to create stable states with self-sustainable economies and stable, inclusive forms of governance.

Much of the world's attention is periodically focused on the phenomenon of so-called failed states. But of the global threats that face us today, apart from nuclear war or HIV/AIDS, the most preoccupying is not failed states. It is the failure of democracy.

The global picture at the beginning of the 21st century is a story of failed democracies in the Muslim world, in Latin America, in Eastern Europe and in sub-Saharan Africa.

A startling fact today is that nearly forty percent of UN member nations are failed democracies. The greatest risk to the West itself, and to its values, is therefore the accumulation of failed democracies. That in turn will cause deep under-currents of stress, if not conflict, among societies. It is essential, in the West's own interest, to admit to itself that democracy is as fragile as any other form of human governance.

It is essential that the question be asked, in every national situation and within each society, "if democracy is failing, why is this the case?" Every effort needs to be made to help correct the situation, rather than referring dismissively to failed states. To my knowledge, democracy can fail anywhere, at any time, in any society—as it has in several well-known and well-

documented situations in Europe, as recently as the last 50 years. For it is self-evident, in Europe and across the globe, that the existence of political parties and elections do not alone produce stable governments or competent leadership.

Three concepts seem to me to be essential in creating, stabilizing and strengthening democracy around the world, including among the people of Africa and Asia with whom I have worked in the past. These concepts are meritocracy, pluralism and civil society. In particular, I will ask, what role can Canada play, drawing upon her national genius, in creating or enhancing these great underpinnings of democracy in the developing world?

A recent UN audit of democracy covering 18 Latin American countries reemphasizes the virtues of democracy in advancing human development; but it also warns that stagnant per capita incomes and growing inequality, in access to civil rights as well as income, are producing doubt, impatience and civil unrest. Thus, the report underlines a key concept that you will all know instinctively, and which my experience working in the developing world has illustrated, decade after decade: the primary, daily concern of peoples everywhere is their quality of life, which is intimately connected to their value systems. When it turns toward solutions, the report recognizes a crucial fact: "An important relationship exists between citizenship and organizations of civil society, which are major actors in the strengthening of democracy, in the oversight of government stewardship and in the development of pluralism."

My interest in these themes of development and governance arises from my role as the hereditary spiritual leader—Imam—of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Culturally very diverse, the Ismailis are spread across the globe, mostly as a minority, in more than twenty-five countries, in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. In recent decades they have also established a substantial presence in Canada, the USA and Western Europe. Since succeeding to this office as the 49th Imam in 1957, I have been concerned with the development of the Ismailis and the broader societies in which they live. The engagement of the Imamate in development is guided by Islamic ethics, which bridge faith and society. It is on this premise that I established the Aga Khan Development Network. This network of agencies, known as the AKDN, has long been active in many areas of Asia and Africa to improve the quality of life of all who live there. These areas are home to some of the poorest and most diverse populations in the world.

Our long presence on the ground gives us an insight that confirms the UN's detailed assessment in Latin America, which is that a democracy cannot function reasonably without two preconditions.

The first is a healthy, civil society. It is an essential bulwark that provides citizens with multiple channels through which to exercise effectively both their rights and duties of citizenship. Even at a very basic level, only a strong civil society can assure isolated rural populations, and the marginalized urban poor of a reasonable prospect of humane treatment, personal security, equity, the absence of discrimination, and access to opportunity.

The second precondition is pluralism. Pluralism means peoples of diverse backgrounds and interests, coming together in organizations of varying types and goals, for different kinds and forms of creative expression, which are valuable and deserving of support by government and society as a whole.

The rejection of pluralism is pervasive across the globe and plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts. Examples are scattered across the world's map: in Asia, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Europe, in the Americas. No continent has been spared from the tragedies of death, of misery and of the persecution of minorities. Are such high-risk situations predictable? If the answer is, "Yes", then what can be done about them, to pre-empt the risk that the rejection of pluralism will become the spark that sets human conflict aflame? Is the onus not on leadership, in all parts of the world, to build a knowledge base about such situations and consider strategies for preventing them? For, I deeply believe that our collective conscience must accept that pluralism is no less important than human rights for ensuring peace, successful democracy and a better quality of life.

I am optimistic that much constructive work can be done, and I would cite one example—only one from the perspective of forty years of experience of agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network—in which the careful, patient development of institutions of civil society helped to create the capacity to manage and legitimize pluralism.

In Northern Pakistan, once one of the poorest areas on earth, our Network has been working for over twenty years, with CIDA as our lead partner. Isolated and bypassed rural communities of different ethnic and religious backgrounds—Shia, Sunni and non-Muslim—struggled to eke out a meager living, farming small holdings in the harsh environment of this mountain desert ecosystem. Relations among the communities were often hostile. The challenge for the Network was to create sustainable, inclusive processes of development in which diverse communities could participate together and seek joint solutions to common problems.

To summarize two decades of work in Northern Pakistan: over 3,900 village based organizations, comprising a mix of broad-based representations and interest-specific groups in such fields as women's initiatives, water usage, and savings and credit were established. The quality of life of 1.3 million people living in a rural environment, representative of the majority of the population of Asia and Africa, has been dramatically improved. Per capita income has increased by 300%, savings have soared, and there have been marked improvements in male and female education, primary health, housing, sanitation and cultural awareness. Former antagonists have debated and worked together to create new programs and social structures in Northern Pakistan, and more recently in Tajikistan. Consensus around hope in the future has replaced conflict born of despair and memories of the past.

This micro experiment with grass roots democracy, civil society and pluralism has also underlined for everyone involved the enormous importance of competence and advancement by merit. Inherent in the notion of merit is the idea of equality of access to opportunities. Citizens who possess potential, whatever the community to which they belong, can only realize their potential if they have access to good education, good health and prospects to advance through enterprise. Without this equity, merit does not develop.

A secure pluralistic society requires communities that are educated and confident both in the identity and depth of their own traditions and in those of their neighbours. Democracies must be educated if they are to express themselves competently, and their electorates are to reach informed opinions about the great issues at stake. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to pluralism and democracy, however, is the lacuna in the general education of the populations involved.

A dramatic illustration is the uninformed speculation about conflict between the Muslim world and others. The clash, if there is such a broad civilizational collision, is not of cultures but of ignorance. How many leaders even in the West, whether in politics, the media or other professions which in their own ways shape public opinion, grow up aware that the historic root cause of the conflict in the Middle East was an outcome of the First World War? Or that the tragedy that is Kashmir is an unresolved colonial legacy, and that neither had anything to do with the faith of Islam? To what extent is the public aware that the deployment of Afghanistan as a proxy by both sides in the Cold War, is a major factor in her recent history of tragic woes? These matters, which now touch the lives of all world citizens, are simply not addressed at any level of general education in most Western countries.

Humanities curricula in many educational institutions in the West, rarely feature great Muslim philosophers, scientists, astronomers and writers of the classical age of Islam, such as Avicenna, Farabi and al-Kindi, Nasir Khusraw and Tusi. This lack of knowledge and appreciation of the civilizations of the Muslim world is a major factor that colors media stereotypes, by concentrating on political hotspots in the Muslim world, and referring to organisations as terrorist and Islamic first, and only obliquely, if at all, to their national origins or political goals.

No wonder that the bogey of Islam as a monolith, irreconcilable to the values of the West or, worse, as a seedbed of violence, lurks behind its depiction as being both opposed to, and incapable of, pluralism. This image flies directly in the face of the respect that Islam's

cherished scripture confers upon believers in monotheistic traditions, calling upon Muslims to engage with them in the finest manner, and with wisdom. History is replete with illustrations where Muslims have entrusted their most treasured possessions, even members of their families, to the care of Christians. Muslim willingness to learn from Jewish erudition in medicine, statecraft and other realms of knowledge, is well exemplified by the place of honour accorded Jewish scholars at the court of the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt.

Intellectual honesty and greater knowledge are essential if current explosive situations are to be understood as inherited conflicts and—rather than being specific to the Muslim world—driven by ethnic and demographic difference, economic inequity and unresolved political situations. An excellent example of what is needed, to shape national sentiments as well as guide foreign policy in this perilous time, is the recent Parliamentary committee report entitled, “Exploring Canada’s Relations with the Countries of the Muslim World”. I wish there were time to comment on a number of the observations of the report, but in its very opening sentence, which begins, “The dynamic complexity and diversity of the Muslim world....” the report sets the tone of balance and wisdom that suffuse its recommendations. It emphasizes history, education, and the urgent need for communication and general knowledge in observing that, “Understanding Islamic influences on government and state policies, on social and economic relations, cultural norms, individual and group rights and the like, necessarily goes far beyond the question of the extreme, violent-minority edges of Islamist activity”. I warmly hope that the resources can be found to bring to life the constructive recommendations of this fine report, as the need for such rational voices is great.

It is urgent that the West gain a better understanding of the Islamic world, which, as the Parliamentary report notes, is a hugely diverse collectivity of civilizations that has developed, and continues to evolve, in response to multiple societal influences—agricultural and rural, commercial and urban, scientific and philosophical, literary and political. Just like other great traditions, the Islamic world cannot be understood only by its faith, but as a total picture whose history is closely tied to that of the Judeo-Christian world.

In this situation of a conflict of ignorance between the Muslim world and the West, an example of Canada’s bridging is the support given by CIDA and McMaster to the Aga Khan University School of Nursing. Not only did this partnership transform nursing education, and the nursing profession, in Pakistan, but is also now having a significant impact in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan and Syria by offering women in these countries new and respected professional opportunities.

Canada is, in an almost unique position to broaden the scope of her engagement with the developing world by sharing very widely her experience in humane governance to support pluralism, the development of civil society, and meritocratic premises for action. For instance, incipient, home-grown civil society institutions in developing countries need expert assistance to strengthen their capacities for management, programme design and implementation, fund raising, self-study and evaluation. They require help in such other areas as defining answerability and the criteria that measure success, as well as in identifying how a sector can be financed and sustained. I am happy to note that this is the declared intention of your Government. In the words of Prime Minister Paul Martin speaking in the House of Commons: “One of the distinct ways in which Canada can help developing nations is to provide the expertise and experience of Canadians in justice, in federalism, in pluralist democracy”.

In living through her history and confronting its challenges, Canada has established strong institutions to sustain her democracy, the cornerstone of which is your multi-faceted, robust civil society. Canada offers the world an example of meshing, and thereby fortifying, civil society with merit from all segments of its population. You are, hence, able to harness the best from different groups because your civil society is not bound by a specific language or race or religion.

My intention is not to embarrass you with too rosy a picture of the Canadian mosaic as if it were free of all tension. But you have the experience, an infrastructure grounded in wisdom, and the moral wherewithal to be able to handle challenges to your social and political fabric.

The Ismaili Imamate strives to ensure that people live in countries where threat to democracy is minimal and seeks to draw on the experience of established democracies, which have a vibrant civil society, are sensitive to cultural difference and are effective in improving the quality of life of their citizenry. Canada is a prime example of such a country. It is for this reason that the Aga Khan Development Network is establishing, in Ottawa, what is to be known as The Global Centre for Pluralism.

This secular, non-denominational Centre will engage in education and research and will also examine the experience of pluralism in practice. Drawing on Canadian expertise, and working closely with governments, academia and civil society, the Centre will seek to foster enabling legislative and policy environments. Its particular emphasis will be on strengthening indigenous capacity for research and policy analysis on pluralism, while also offering educational, professional development and public awareness programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen: There are compelling reasons, as I have tried to articulate, why Canada can and should take the lead in investing to safeguard and enhance pluralism. We inhabit an overcrowded planet with shrinking resources, yet we share a common destiny. A weakness or pain in one corner has the tendency, rather rapidly, to transmit itself across the globe. Instability is infectious! But so is hope! It is for you - the leaders of today and tomorrow - to carry the torch of that hope and help to share the gift of pluralism.

Thank you.



## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration Ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy Kilindini, Mombasa, Kenya Saturday 20th December 2003**

Your Excellency, President Mwai Kibaki,  
Honourable Minister for Education, Professor. George Saitoti,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

In the long history of the Ismaili Imam's engagement with education, covering well over a 1000 years and numerous countries past and present, few days can have been as important as this one. It is therefore with the greatest happiness and gratitude that I thank His Excellency the President of Kenya, Mr. Mwai Kibaki for having accepted my invitation formally to open the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa. Your Excellency, it is a source of very great joy to everyone associated with the Aga Khan Academies and their aspirations of becoming Centres of Educational Excellence to have you here.

I welcome the presence here today of the Ministers of Education from Kenya, the Hon. Professor George Saitoti;

From the Democratic Republic of Congo, Minister of Higher Education Emile N'Goy Kassongo and Educational Advisor to the President, Sangwa Ibiy;

Minister Mer Ranjivason from Madagascar;  
Minister Mamadou Lamine Traore from Mali;  
Minister Alcido Nguenha from Mozambique;  
Minister Joseph Mungai from Tanzania;  
From Uganda, Minister Dr. Edward Khiddu Makubuya  
And from Zanzibar, Minister Suleiman Haroun Ali.

I would also like to note the presence of Prof. Mondo Kagonyera, Minister for General Duties, Uganda, and Mr. Kaidha Ordinaev the Deputy Minister of Education of Tajikistan, who have accepted my invitation to share this important day with us.

I also welcome key figures in education from other parts of the world who are present with us today, particularly Ms. Cathy Cox Secretary of State for the State of Georgia and her husband Mark Dehler, Ambassador Saidullah Khan Dehlavi, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Aga Khan University, Mrs. Barabara Chase the Principal of Phillips Academy Andover, Richard Larivière, Dean of the College of Liberal Studies University of Texas, and Mrs. Larivière, and Sam Cherribi Special Assistant to the Provost, Emory University, Atlanta Georgia.

The presence of all these honoured guests signifies an occasion of remarkable commitment to educating future generations in Africa, Central Asia and North America. I am honoured by your presence, and gratified by the commitment that you represent to improving the education that we all offer in our respective areas of the globe.

Everyone who joins in the establishment of a new school participates in an act of joyful hope and faith. A new school looks to a better world, for it exists to help students develop the character, intellect and mental resilience that will enable them to prosper in circumstances that we can only imagine. If it becomes a great school, it will educate its students not merely to be personally successful but also to use their gifts to build their communities and enhance the common good to levels beyond our dreams. In dedicating this school then, we dedicate the governing board, teaching and administrative staff and students to the most devoted and creative service to Kenya, to Africa, and to mankind.

In these few minutes I will underline what I believe to be the ideas and principles that will drive the Aga Khan Academy, Kilindini. I do so because I see it as the pioneer institution in what I hope will become in the next few years a network of schools of the highest international standards, from primary through higher secondary education, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the

Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia. It is my hope that through joint ventures and curricular collaboration they will continually enhance the global content, so necessary today, in the standard education of schools in North America and Europe.

Before the AKDN and I could commit ourselves to such a high profile international academic endeavour, and one that will require significant human and material resources over several decades, we needed to assure ourselves that the logic of the concept was solid. One of the factors which reinforced our decision was the deplorable state of much of higher education in the areas of the world where our network of new schools will be established. While the causes and consequences of this are well known, it is clear that the corrective processes which are now being put in place will take many years to bear fruit and that even as this occurs it is unlikely to expand the numbers of young men and women who will have access to higher quality education in the future.

Thus a very high percentage of secondary students will never have the possibility of proceeding to higher education in the years ahead. Probably not more than 15% of graduating students from the secondary schools of our areas will ever go to university. It is to the 85% of the students who currently end their education at secondary school, that the Aga Khan Academies aspire to offer new and significantly better opportunities.

Another consideration is the somber global circumstances in which we launch this new school.

In troubling ways we see a world more deeply divided, farther from the great ideals of tolerance and respect among nations, faiths and peoples that emerged from the devastation of World War II, than at any time since the end of the Colonial Era. We know too well the divisions on the continent of Africa, of rich from poor, of the gravely ill from the healthy and well fed, of ethnic and religious groups set against one another by fear and incomprehension, or greed and ambition, although they may for centuries have inhabited the same villages.

These conditions are dismaying, but I believe that this is also a time of great promise: that men and women of integrity, understanding and generosity of spirit can create the human institutions that will lay foundations of knowledge, trust and tolerance for bridging these terrible divides.

The effective world of the future is one of pluralism-that is to say, a world that comprehends and accepts differences. But such a world must be based on a new intellectual and spiritual equality and it must be educated to see in pluralism, opportunities for growth in all areas of human endeavour. History has shown in every part of the world and at every time, that the rejection of pluralism and the attempt to normalise the human race has always resulted in factionalism, oppressiveness and economic and social regression.

What is required to address this context?

First, and most obviously, the citizens of Africa and Asia must function intellectually at the highest international levels. Their writings and research must contribute to the global edifice of knowledge; their economists, lawyers, physicians and scientists must participate easily in professional and scientific societies around the world; and their publications, inventions, and artistic and architectural creations must be of a quality to enrich the human experience. There are ample instances of this sort of performance to underline that human talent is not lacking - although too often the performer has emigrated from Africa or Asia.

Second, and perhaps less obviously, to participate confidently in a plural world, the citizens of Africa and Asia must have a deeper grasp of the cultures from which they spring. It is an enduring frustration for Asian students wishing to do advanced study, for example, in Urdu linguistics, or Ottoman bureaucracy, or Assyrian sculpture that they can only do this in Europe or North America. An African student wishing to study the history of the middle period of his continent will probably go to Paris or London.

This is not in itself wrong, but it is an anachronistic absurdity. Asian and African scholars and researchers-anthropologists, archeologists, art historians and musicologists-are gravely needed in enduring, productive concentrations to create the books and materials that will educate the children of Africa and Asia about their own cultural underpinnings.

The creation of broadly based scientific and intellectual communities, however, requires more than universities. Educators in the Aga Khan Development Network have worked in East Africa and South Asia for nearly a century, learning over the years in Aga Khan institutions from pre-school to university post-graduate levels, that education is a continuum. Confident attitudes to education, habits of learning, develop early in life. They are related to health and physical vitality, reinforced by steady, predictable environments of honesty, fairness and intellectual rigor.

It is on this base of experience that I took the decision to launch a new network of academic centers of excellence, with the aim of educating young men and women up to the highest international standards from primary through higher secondary education. It is my hope that, in due course, these schools will be located not only in Kenya, but in Tanzania, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Madagascar, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, Syria and Mali.

These academic centers of excellence will over time become an alliance or system. Advanced students and teaching faculty will be able to move easily among the Schools, which will be residential, and which, while they meet national government requirements, will share their own high intellectual and pedagogical standards. Graduates, through their periods of study on other campuses, will have personally experienced different social, ethnic and religious environments. English will be their medium of instruction, but they will have become bilingual, and ideally trilingual, and, whether they attend the best universities in their own countries or those in the Western world, they will be equipped to lead in the professions in the societies in which they decide to establish themselves. Students in the Schools will gain basic education in the fields of study most needed for the development of their societies and home countries, but they will also have a strong grounding in the humanities. Most particularly, they will engage in study of the world's great civilizations, including those of the Muslim world.

I would underline three characteristics that will be indispensable to the Schools of Excellence.

The first is quality-of teachers, of students and of physical facilities. The Schools will adopt the International General Certificate of Secondary Education and the International Baccalaureate as their curriculum frameworks because this will align the Schools' academic programs with known, proven international standards and because these frameworks are sufficiently flexible to accommodate humanistic and social scientific materials developed in local environments. But the intellectual quality of a school depends not upon an abstract curricular design, but upon the quality of mind, classroom inventiveness and dedication of the teacher and upon the support given that teacher by parents and school leaders. A major goal of these academic centres of excellence therefore is to rejuvenate and restore the public standing of the profession of teaching. The minds of our children require teachers who are the intellectual equals to the best professionals in other fields such as law and medicine. We must not only compensate them appropriately and in accord with our expectations that they will grow professionally, but assure to them a quality of life which will both satisfy them, and encourage future generations of educated men and women to see in teaching a great and valid opportunity in life, and not a profession of last resort.

Students must be admitted because of their merit: their intellectual promise and evidence of their character and desire to learn. This means that the Schools must have the capacity to select them without regard to their families' ability to pay the school's fees. A talented, highly motivated student body is a joy to teachers, bringing out their best, and it will establish standards of performance and behavior for other students.

The buildings and spaces of a school, often the first exposure of young people to architecture and designed spaces, both educate the eye of students and reinforce the intellectual standards and cultural rootedness of the institution. The comments of parents about the

architecture of the school at Kilindini illustrate gratifyingly their awareness of the connection between the intellectual and physical standards of a school.

The interplay among teachers, students and facilities of the first quality then are what create an excellent school, regardless of the vicissitudes of time and fashion.

Second, I would underline the importance to the academic centers of excellence of their connectedness to other intellectual resources. No school is an island. Over time, the Schools will become resources for one another, but today the Aga Khan Development Network makes it possible for this Aga Khan Academy to be a partner with three sources of ideas and program assistance.

For over a decade the Aga Khan University's Institute of Educational Development (IED), in association with the Universities of Oxford and Toronto, has been working with the schools of Pakistan, and more recently of East Africa, to foster great teaching. Through IED-related Professional Development Schools, teachers deepen their knowledge of their fields, develop their teaching skills and learn the value of self-monitoring and self-criticism. This Aga Khan Academy, in association with the IED, will from its very inception, have at its core a unit to foster the development of teachers.

Recent history has highlighted the risk to the fields of general knowledge of the absence in education in the industrialized world of a knowledge of Islamic humanities. AKU recognized as early as the 1980's the consequences of this vacuum in general education and conceived an institute to address it. This led to the creation, in 2001, of the AKU Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations in London as a source of ideas, research and course materials. The Institute, in its short history, has begun to draw together scholars from around the Muslim world and beyond it to consider the great ethical, economic, artistic and social issues that Muslim societies have faced over the centuries.

Finally, the Schools will be connected to other schools, with their own needs and aspirations. The AKDN's International Academic Partnership will provide the centres of academic excellence with access to the experience and curricular resources of such leading international schools as Philips Academy in the US represented here today by Mrs. Barabara Chase, and Salem in Germany. This in turn will enhance the ability of the Aga Khan Academies to make constructive connections with their neighboring government schools. As with all AKDN institutions, the academies must be vital players in national development efforts.

The third essential quality these academic centers of excellence need to guard and treasure is their integrity. Education is an intensely moral enterprise, which depends upon clear ethical rules. If children and their families can be confident that admission to the Academies is by open, understood criteria, that examinations are administered with integrity and that honors are awarded only for intellectual

merit, the Academies will attract the most able and honorable applicants. The environment of the school, if it deplores bullying, cheating and special treatment, will nurture growth, fearlessness and good character in its students. From such a school, graduates and faculty will be welcomed anywhere in the world, and the reputation of the school will be a light in its society.

As the young men and women from this Aga Khan Academy, and over time from its sister schools, grow and assume leadership in their societies, it is my hope that it will be members of this new generation who, driven by their own wide knowledge and inspiration, will change their societies; that they will gradually replace many of the external forces that appear, and sometimes seek, to control our destinies. These young men and women, I am sure, will become leaders in the governments and the institutions of civil society in their own countries, in international organizations and in all those institutions, academic, economic and artistic that create positive change in our world. It is my strongest hope that you who carry on the great mission of teaching them will take pride in the confident, resilient minds that you have nurtured. Thank You.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Opening of Alltex EPZ Limited at Athi River, Kenya - 19th December 2003**

Your Excellency, President Mwai Kibaki,  
Honourable Minister for Industry, Mukisa Kituyi  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin my remarks this morning by thanking His Excellency, President Mwai Kibaki for accepting formally to open this new enterprise, Alltex. I also extend my warmest congratulations to the government and people of Kenya on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Kenya's independence, celebrated a week ago. I have a vivid personal memory of being in Nairobi on the 12th December 1963, to witness that historic event. It is an anniversary, Your Excellency, that is proudly shared by Industrial Promotion Services (Kenya) Limited, the sponsor of the enterprise to be inaugurated today. For IPS, too, was born here in 1963 and has grown and matured with the nation whose private sector it had been conceived to help build.

Four decades on, it might be appropriate to pause and reflect on the purpose for establishing IPS and the other institutions that today comprise the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development or AKFED. First, however permit me to share with you a few thoughts about the Ismaili Imamat, the institution that represents the hereditary office that I hold, and its relevance to the creation of development institutions.

The Imamat is a Muslim institution with a history going back over 1400 years. As Imam of the Ismaili Muslims, I am to be concerned with the quality of life of the Community and those amongst whom it lives. Over many centuries and decades, that responsibility of the Imamat has entailed the creation of institutions to address issues of the quality of life of the time, and it today includes a number of non-governmental organisations, foundations and economic development agencies. The vast majority of the community now lives in countries of the developing world and the newly emerging nations of Central Asia. In these countries, the quality of life is determined by a number of different factors that are, in my view, not limited to the World Bank indicators on longevity, or health, or the economic welfare of an individual, or a community. To the Imamat the meaning of "quality of life" extends to the entire ethical and social context in which people live, and not only to their material well-being measured over generation after generation. Consequently, the Imamat's is a holistic vision of development, as is prescribed by the faith of Islam. It is about investing in people, in their pluralism, in their intellectual pursuit, and search for new and useful knowledge, just as much as in material resources. But it is also about investing with a social conscience inspired by the ethics of Islam. It is work that benefits all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality or background. Does the Holy Quran not say in one of the most inspiring references to mankind, that Allah has created all mankind from one soul?

Today, this vision is implemented by institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network. Our non-profit agencies include the Aga Khan Foundation, the Aga Khan Education Services, the Aga Khan Health Services and the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services. Their mandate is social development covering schools, health centres, rural support, water and sanitation programmes and the enhancement of civil society organisations. The initiatives of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, another non-profit agency, include promoting and teaching architecture, revitalising historic spaces, and even traditional music, and developing educational curricula. These non-profit agencies are all about investing in people. Our higher educational institutions, the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia, which hope to help mould some of the most talented in future generations, will do so most competently by investing in research. Finally, it is the Network's for-profit agency, AKFED, that focuses on investing in material resources. The most important feature of these organisations, however, is that they share a vision, they work together, they create opportunity and they are inscribed in a single ethical framework.

AKFED, the entity that oversees and invests in projects such as Alltex, is therefore neither a charitable foundation, nor a vehicle for the personal wealth of the Ismaili Imam of the time. It is a for-profit, international development agency that, because of its institutional background and social conscience, invests in countries, sectors and projects, on criteria far different from those of a straightforward commercial investor. Investment decisions are based more on the prospects for better lives for the constituencies of people that will be impacted by the investments and their results rather than on bottom line profitability. AKFED does seek to generate profits, but they are entirely reinvested in future development initiatives.

AKFED's various entities, grouped broadly into industry, tourism, financial services, media services and aviation services, look to create economic capacity and opportunity in the developing world, particularly in those areas of the national or regional economies where they are lacking in scope, or scale, or both. This means creating new human and material resources for the future. It means adapting new technologies. It means developing new national and international markets. We have recognised these imperatives.

The approach of the Imamatus has always been to respond to the development challenges and priorities of the countries in which it is engaged. Naturally, these priorities differ significantly from one country to another, and from one region to another. It has often meant taking courageous but calculated steps to create opportunity in environments that are fragile and complex at the same time. For AKFED, this has frequently meant giving a lead where others might have feared to tread.

Rehabilitating economies arising out of civil conflict or internal turmoil has been a challenge we have undertaken in environments as varied as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Uganda. Once again, however, it is not about short-term commercial gain, but long-term investment in areas of wide human and societal impact. In Afghanistan revitalising telecommunications through GSM telephony, and tourism through a landmark hotel is one example. Bringing light and power for education, industry and safety to Eastern Tajikistan through the Pamir 1 power station is another. Rural electrification in Western Uganda is yet another. Jump-starting local economies through innovative microfinance programmes and related institutions, as has been the case in Afghanistan, Mozambique and Tajikistan is yet a fourth. Each of these initiatives has entailed important manpower development components, investment in technical and management training as well as a significant multiplier effect.

Today's event evidences a consistent strategy by IPS to support national policies here in Kenya. Our earliest efforts involved creating industrial enterprises focused on import-substitution. Over the years, we have recognised the need to promote exports. Your Excellency spoke recently of the need for agricultural production to benefit from far greater local value-added input; this is precisely the approach taken by IPS in the processing of leather, horticultural produce, meat, and now textiles. And these purpose-built premises, house a factory designed to grow Kenya's capacity in the textile industry far into the future. We continue to support the government's privatisation policies in particular, their encouragement of private sector engagement in the provision of infrastructural services. The Tsavo Power Company, an IPS project, has set benchmarks in innovative financing and environmental compliance in the power sector. Here at the Alltex plant we are working with the Kenya Railway Authorities to facilitate the movement of goods in and out of the Athi River Export Processing Zone by adding a link/container terminal to the existing railway network.

For us, responding appropriately to economic opportunity means finding ways of positively impacting people's lives. Introducing valuable social services such as crèches of the kind we have here at Alltex, and programmes for HIV/AIDS sufferers, are amongst IPS's pioneering initiatives, here as elsewhere in Africa. Increasing employment opportunities for women who today account for over 40% of the employees of the IPS network has been another. Export-oriented industries in agro business, we have found, through our involvement over the past 15 years, can mean guaranteed, steady incomes and better prospects. AKFED is pleased to be able to contribute to improving the livelihoods of some 40,000 families in the agricultural sector here in Kenya.

Because of their limited resources countries of the developing world will need to be particularly effective in the way they use their resources, and one such direction now being taken by countries of both the industrialised world and the developing worlds is regionalisation.

The East African Community and the planned customs union to be agreed next month will certainly help widen markets and growth potential. The short-term support that the agreement envisages for industries in Uganda and Tanzania vis-à-vis Kenya can help refine and strengthen efficiencies in this country. We remain committed to the regional approach. AKFED sees valuable opportunities to continue to transfer knowledge between countries in the region and to take advantage of economies of scale as it expands its activities, particularly in the tourism sector.

I would urge however, that the East African countries widen the horizons of their regionalization endeavours to include all the key development institutions and resources of civil society. It is when that happens, and only when that happens, that the totality of the region's human resources will be fully and optimally mobilised, including the capacities of the NGOs, voluntary agencies and liberal professions.

From the point of view of the Aga Khan Development Network there is a lesson we have learnt, and a goal that we hold high. Training, researching, conceiving, planning, and advocating for development are all necessary, but demonstrating that successful and sustainable outcomes can actually be established is the real test. That is part of the rationale for the Aga Khan non-commercial delivery agencies, schools, hospitals and clinics, that is the rationale for our conservation, restoration and cultural initiatives, and that is certainly the rationale for the commercial companies established and operated by the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Laying Ceremony of the Ismaili Centre in Dubai, Saturday, 13th December 2003**

BISMI-LLAHI-R-RAHAMANI-R-RAHIM

Your Highness Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply honoured by your presence this morning.

May I, at the outset, express my sincere gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum for the kind courtesies and hospitality that have been extended to me since my arrival in Dubai. We fully understand that circumstances have prevented His Highness from joining us this morning. I am, however, delighted that His Highness Sheikh Ahmed is with us on this occasion and it is a joy to me that I am able to meet Sheikh Ahmed after twenty years on my first visit to Dubai.

Today's ceremony marks an event that I believe to be as significant for the contemporary landscape of this region as it is historic for the Ismaili Muslim Community worldwide.

At a time when the search for mutual understanding remains essential to assuring peace and stability, the creation of spaces that will enable that search becomes a greater imperative than ever.

The Ismaili Centre in Dubai was conceived, and will be established, for that very purpose, amongst others. It is, therefore, a matter of great happiness for me personally to be present here today as the foundation stone of the Centre is laid on land most generously gifted by His Highness the Crown Prince.

On behalf of the Ismaili Muslim community worldwide and myself as their Imam, I thank His Highness most sincerely for a noble gesture that epitomises attitudes and values which, for almost a millennium and a half, have defined the outlook and gracious disposition of an Ummah, historically diverse, yet bound by the ethics of a common faith.

Let me take this occasion to pay tribute to the experience of the Emirates which, like the lesson of Islam's history, illustrates admirably what heights are achievable, in realising human potential, when national interest and Muslim identity are anchored in values - our historical values - that widen intellectual horizons, and help to build bridges of friendship and understanding.

Your experience demonstrates that a sagacious crafting of policies on these inherited value systems and projected wisely and creatively into the future is the soundest basis for building a dynamic modern civil society that will harness the creative energies of a pluralist citizenry for the common good of all.

The transformation of the small trading port that was once Dubai into a vibrant metropolis has paralleled its demographic growth and cosmopolitan evolution. The intermingling of cultures that so enlivens this thriving city is one of the strengths on which Dubai has built its renown as a point of global convergence.

It is precisely this notion of convergence that has characterised the Ismaili Community's successful endeavours to contribute, through the institutional framework of the Aga Khan Development Network, towards addressing critical development challenges of the day. The Centre will provide facilities to promote cultural, educational and social programmes from the broadest, non-denominational perspectives within the ethical framework of Islam. Amongst them will be an Early Learning Centre where the Aga Khan Education Services, a philanthropic agency, will draw on its own extensive experience in many parts of the world to offer broad, holistic, early childhood education on a secular and non-denominational basis at the highest international standards of excellence. The objective is to have a curriculum of



proven calibre, taught by competent teachers, to help lay strong foundations for a child's continuing educational growth.

In the Middle East and the Gulf region, the Aga Khan Development Network is active in the areas of urban development, conservation, restoration, education, healthcare, microfinance, higher education, culture and rural development. The future Ismaili Centre in Dubai will serve as a resource to support these activities. Architect Rami El Dahan has seized the challenge of designing the Centre in a manner that will permit these interactions even as it preserves and revives traditions of architecture and spirituality.

At this juncture, perhaps, it would be appropriate to situate one of the functions of the Ismaili Centre in the tradition of Muslim piety. For many centuries, a prominent feature of the Muslim religious landscape has been the variety of spaces of gathering co-existing harmoniously with the masjid, which in itself has accommodated a range of diverse institutional spaces for educational, social and reflective purposes. Historically serving communities of different interpretations and spiritual affiliations, these spaces have retained their cultural nomenclatures and characteristics, from ribat and zawiyah to khanaqah and jamatkhana. The congregational space incorporated within the Ismaili Centre belongs to the historic category of jamatkhana, an institutional category that also serves a number of sister Sunni and Shia communities, in their respective contexts, in many parts of the world. Here, it will be space reserved for traditions and practices specific to the Shia Ismaili tariqah of Islam.

In the tradition of Muslim spaces of gathering, the Ismaili Centre will be a symbol of the confluence between the spiritual and the secular in Islam. Architect El Dahan has drawn inspiration from the Fatimid mosques in Cairo. Like its functions, the Centre's architecture will reflect our perception of daily life whose rhythm weaves the body and the soul, man and nature into a seamless unity. Guided by the ethic of whatever we do, see and hear, and the quality of our social interactions, resonate on our faith and bear on our spiritual lives, the Centre will seek to create, Insh'allah, a sense of equilibrium, stability and tranquillity. This sense of balance and serenity will find its continuum in the wealth of colours and scents in the adjacent Islamic garden which the Aga Khan Trust for Culture will help to develop as a public park.

I spoke earlier of the Emirate's policies that enable different elements of its society to empathise as a united citizenry, working for the common good of all. A key aim of the Ismaili Centre in Dubai will be to enhance, facilitate and, indeed, encourage mutual exchanges and understanding, all of which are so critical to a country's sustained development. The Centre will offer facilities for lectures, presentations, seminars and conferences relating to the Aga Khan Development Network's areas of activity in social, economic and cultural endeavour. It will also host recitals and exhibitions that will serve to educate wider publics about the breadth of Islam's heritage.

This, indeed, is a central purpose of the major Ismaili Centres that have already been established in London, Vancouver and Lisbon, and of the others that are in the process of being established in Toronto and Dushanbe. Consistent with this aim, in October this year, the Ismaili Centre in London hosted an international colloquium on the Holy Quran that was attended by more than 250 scholars from around the world, both Muslim and of other faiths. They brought an impressive array of academic disciplines to bear on a reflection of how the revelation of Islam, with its challenge to man's innate gift of quest and reason, became a powerful impetus for a new flowering of human awakening and civilization.

It is my hope that, Insh'allah, the future Ismaili Centre in Dubai will host similar programmes. Through its design and functions, this Centre, like its predecessors, will reflect a mood of humility, forward outlook, friendship and dialogue. Above all, this Centre is being conceived in the ethic of respect for human dignity. It will, therefore, aim to empathise with, and to expand our intellectual, cultural and moral horizons.

It is my humble prayer that, when built, the Ismaili Centre in Dubai will be a place for contemplation and search for enlightenment, where people come together to share knowledge and wisdom. It will be a place of peace, of order, of hope and of brotherhood,

radiating those thoughts, attitudes and sentiments which unite, and which do not divide, and which uplift the mind and the spirit.

Thank you.

## **Address to 2003 Aga Khan University Convocation**

**His Highness the Aga Khan  
Karachi, Pakistan  
December 6, 2003**

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali,  
Your Excellency, Governor of Sindh, Dr Ishrat-ul-Ebad,  
Honourable Chief Minister of Sindh, Sardar Ali Mohammad Khan Mahar,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Faculty, staff and students of the Aga Khan University,  
Parents and families of our students,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me very great pleasure to address this 16th Convocation of the [Aga Khan University](#) and to welcome the Prime Minister to this important occasion in the life of the Aga Khan University. He has a particularly demanding schedule at this time, including a long journey abroad within the next days and his presence amongst us today is testimony of his own and his government's commitment to education in Pakistan and their conviction in its essential role for the future destiny of this great country. I am also most happy to be able to greet so many of our friends and supporters from Asia, Africa and North America who are also our generous and committed partners in the life of this institution.

I share the joy and pride of everyone associated with the achievements of AKU's 241 new graduates. You enter the world as nurses and physicians, researchers and educators, with the University's and my highest expectations that you will contribute to your societies as professional givers of health care and solace, and of educational skills and aspirations, but also as intelligent and wise voices in the communities you serve. This is a time that will call for the very best of truly educated minds: your skills and specialised knowledge, but also your patience and tolerance. Above all, it will call for your understanding. May you bring reason, and hope to all whom you touch in your professional and personal lives, and may you find your work deeply rewarding.

The Aga Khan University is now 20 years old, but its aspirations were formed in the 1970s – nearly a generation ago. Some ten years ago, the Chancellor's Commission re-examined the University's goals and intentions that were set down in the Harvard Report of 1983 and found them to be no less salient. The Commission strongly reaffirmed AKU's commitment to be, in its words, an 'open, Muslim university, devoted to free inquiry of distinction, quality and international character, preparing its students for constructive, worthwhile and responsible roles in society'.

There were questions in AKU's early years about the timeliness and priority of a university, in an environment in which poverty and illiteracy – as we knew only too well – were dauntingly high. Would a new university and its university hospital merely benefit well-prepared students and well-off patients, replicating existing social divisions? It is only in the last few years that new voices, such as the World Bank's, have noted the world's 'knowledge revolution' in which it is not so much factories, land and machinery that now drive the world economy but the knowledge, skills and resourcefulness of people. All societies, it has become clear, must invest in higher education for their talented men and women or risk being relegated to subordinate, vulnerable positions in the world.

The feelings of the subordination of people – that they are victims of an economic or cultural globalisation in which they cannot be full partners but from which they cannot remain apart – these feelings fuel some of the most potent, destructive forces at play in our world today. The sense of vulnerability is especially powerful in parts of the Muslim world, which is itself heir to one of the greatest civilisations the world has known, but which also has inherited from

history, not of its making, some of the worst and longest conflicts of the last 100 years, those of the Middle East and Kashmir. When people of a distinctive faith or culture feel economically powerless, or inherit clear injustice from which they cannot escape, or find their traditions and values engulfed culturally, and their societies maligned as bleak and unjust, some amongst them can too readily become vulnerable. They risk becoming the victims of those who would gain power by perverting an open, fluid, pluralistic tradition of thought, and belief, into something closed, and insular.

It would be wrong to see this as the future of the [umma](#). There are many today across the Muslim world who know their history and deeply value their heritage, but who are also keenly sensitive to the radically altered conditions of the modern world. They realise, too, how erroneous and unreasonable it is to believe that there is an unbridgeable divide between their heritage and the modern world. There is clearly a need to mitigate not what is a 'clash of civilisations' but a 'clash of ignorance' where peoples of different faiths or cultural traditions, are so ignorant of each others that they are unable to find a common language with which to communicate. Those with an educated and enlightened approach – amongst whom I can count our graduates – are of the firm and sincere conviction that their societies can benefit from modernity while remaining true to tradition. But they will bring to our world more than that: they will be the bridge which can eliminate forever today's dangerous clash of ignorance.

It is especially at times when ignorance, conflict and apprehension, are so rife, that universities, in both the Muslim world and in the West, have a greater obligation to promote intellectual openness and tolerance, and to create increased cultural understanding. Muslim universities, however, have a unique responsibility: to engender in their societies a new confidence. It must be a confidence based on intellectual excellence, but also on a refreshed and enlightened appreciation of the scientific, linguistic, artistic and religious traditions that underpin and give such global value to our own Muslim civilisations – even though it may be ignored or not understood by parts of the *umma* itself.

In the 20 years since the granting of its charter, the AKU has made a good beginning.

[The School of Nursing](#) in Pakistan and Eastern Africa have become known internationally for the professional competence of their graduates and the value to Asia and Africa of their curricula and pedagogy. I am delighted that today we award the first postgraduate diplomas to two graduates of the Masters programme in Nursing. As the president has said this is the first time in Pakistan that postgraduate degrees in Nursing have been offered and I view it as a major achievement not only for the nursing profession but for higher education for women in Pakistan and the Muslim world.

Graduates of the [Medical College](#) have established the reputation of their scientific and clinical preparations in residencies in excellent teaching hospitals around the world.

Medical College faculty members have proven themselves to be talented instructors and clinicians of the highest standards in their respective specialisations at the University Hospital.

[The Hospital](#) itself is now certified to be meeting stringent international standards of care. It continues to respond swiftly to major emergencies in Karachi. And I am especially pleased that its outreach services in Pakistan, in such areas as family medicine, home physiotherapy and laboratory tests, will by the end of the year have treated some two million patients.

[The Institute for Educational Development](#), helped greatly by grants from the international community, is revitalising teaching and curricular improvement in schools in Pakistan, in Central Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Africa. It is working hard to develop research based educational policymaking.

I do not minimise these achievements, nor do I ignore the importance of the University's continuing investment in its buildings, laboratories, instrumentation and precious faculty resources, when I say that AKU now has the strength and the duty to tackle an array of new

challenges. Most were foreseen by AKU earliest planners, but the perils and voids of understanding I have suggested give them particular urgency now.

First the university must continue to expand its programmes of research. The true sign of maturity and excellence in a university is its ability to contribute to the knowledge of mankind, in its own society and beyond. It is equally essential that its faculty be challenged, as a matter of university policy, to expand the boundaries of human knowledge. Any vestige of dependence is cast off, any suspicion of a young scientist or scholar that he or she may sacrifice intellectual excitement by leaving the West is allayed, when a university becomes known for generating new ideas, making new discoveries and influencing events.

Some of this research will be in advanced realms of the medical sciences, for AKU, and Pakistan, must be part of the international edifice of inquiry in such fields as microbiology and biochemistry that will contribute much to the quality of human life in the coming century. But, because this is AKU, such work will usually be targeted, like the genetic research mentioned by the President, in an area, such as hypertension, of great concern to the people of Pakistan.

Much AKU research, however, will focus on pressing issues of public policy. This naturally follows the precepts of Islam, that the scientific application of reason, the building of society and the refining of human aspirations and ethics should always reinforce one another. The University – and notably the [Department of Community Health Sciences](#) – is already developing strength in applied research. This has enabled it to develop very productive relations between AKU scholars and scientists and provincial, federal and aid agency policy makers in such fields as nutrition, educational testing, maternal and child health, immunisation strategies and vaccine development and epidemiology.

So important is this growing research capacity and informed discourse with policy makers, that the University must strengthen its public policy commitment. Large problem areas, for human development, and bio-ethics, to economic growth, and human settlements, desperately need systematic thought and information, and, whether through an Institute of Public Policy, or through policy units in existing departments, or even fully developed new faculties, AKU will pledge its energies and imagination to advancing effective public policy.

The second new emphasis of AKU that I would mention will gradually and beneficially change its nature: *internationalisation*. By the terms of its charter, AKU is to be an international university, with programmes, projects and even institutes and campuses in other countries that have the desire, capacity and collegial spirit for partnership. The times I have described make these partnerships especially valuable today, and over time they will broaden and greatly strengthen the University.

AKU has made a good beginning in East Africa. In collaboration with [Aga Khan Hospitals and Health Services](#), the School of Nursing has established Advanced Nursing Programs, as the President has indicated, in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania with the encouragement of their governments. I should emphasise to you that this is the first time in history of medical education in Eastern Africa that a private sector network of institutions is offering medical degrees to the peoples of Eastern Africa. Postgraduate medical education for physicians, assisted by our medical College, will soon follow in these countries. In the field of education, AKU will soon establish in East Africa a new Institute for Educational Development with its model, tested for a decade in Pakistan, of Professional Development Centres for teacher-improvement and curriculum development. They will work both with national schools and with the first Aga Khan Schools of Excellence, private boarding schools of international quality that are now being established in East Africa. The objective of these schools is to enable means-blind, merit-based access to educational and extracurricular facilities of the highest international standards with multilingual curricula based on the [International Baccalaureate](#) programme. There will, *inshallah* eventually be up to 21 such Schools of Excellence in numerous countries in Africa and Central Asia and South Asia. Students and faculty will be encouraged to live and learn from all that this multinational network of schools can offer, circulating extensively within it. New generations of teachers and graduates with multilingual

competencies and a new understanding of human pluralism should emerge. Some of these men and women will return to educate at AKU's IED here in Pakistan, the future one to be created in East Africa and to teach at the Professional Development Centres. Hopefully this will result in a significant enhancement of the professional standing and strength of teachers in Asia and Africa. In due course, it is possible to imagine a full, comprehensive AKU campus in East Africa with strengths in educational development, health sciences education, and public policy.

The University is also now working in Afghanistan, where the School of Nursing is helping increase the capacities of the Intermediate Medical Education Institutes of which there are six; in Syria, where we see the beginnings of productive work with the Ministry of Education; and in Central Asia with the University of Central Asia recently established by an international treaty between the Ismaili [Imamat](#) and the governments of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

I strongly believe that, as these international associations increase, it will become clear that, although AKU's immediate goal is to provide assistance, its long-term goal is not mere extension of its existing skills, but the enhancement of its core purposes with partners of equal strength in different cultural settings. When this happens, AKU will be a most exciting innovation: a genuinely international, intercultural university, exchanging students and faculty among campuses that share a common goal of intellectual excellence.

My third aspiration is that AKU now fulfil its mission to become a comprehensive university and a *centre of liberal study of Muslim civilisations*. Muslim scholars in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa are researching, publishing and discussing far too few books on Muslim history, architecture, city planning, art, philosophy, economics and languages and literatures. There is too little public sustenance for, and debate about, contemporary Muslim architecture and literature – and relatively little of the literary, cinematic and music talent from Turkey, Egypt and Iran that is now beginning to be recognised. The consequences are an intelligentsia – and a younger, successor generation – that is intellectually unchallenged and culturally undernourished, and a one-way flow of scholarship and popular culture from the West, which, in turn, receives all too little that is creative and interpretative, scholarly and artistic, from the Muslim world.

In the coming decade, I believe AKU can help, less to fill a void than to become a magnet and a concentration for Muslim scholars who are vividly engaged in a broad range of humanistic studies. AKU's [Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations](#), in London, is making a beginning. It is assembling scholars from around the Arabic, Farsi and Urdu-speaking parts of the Muslim world in the fields of philosophy, history and other disciplines. Through public seminars and research monographs on a variety of topics – ethics, ecology, historiography, scholarly traditions, and dimensions of Muslim identity – they will develop and test the curriculum of an MA in Muslim Civilisations that will be of value to the liberal professions including diplomats, teachers, business people, publishers and journalists, civil servants and NGO professionals.

The hub of this scholarly venture will be the AKU's new Faculty of Arts and Sciences, which will be well under way in the present decade. The Faculty will establish a residential campus on 600 acres of land that the University has purchased to the north east of Karachi. In its first phase it will have 1400 to 1500 undergraduates and some 100 postgraduate students. Undergraduates will experience rigorous (*aside to the faculty*) – I hope you are listening – rigorous pedagogy, in English, and receive education in the sciences, economics and information technology. But they will also with equal rigor, be expected to master a broad core curriculum that engages them in world history, in the study of one or more Asian languages and in the strong foundation courses on the elements of Muslim civilisations, on South Asian history and culture, and on the history of the Persian speaking world. They will also (*aside to the faculty*) – and I hope you are still listening – perform summer service and research projects in rural and urban areas of their own societies.

Such interdisciplinary programmes as Human Development, Government, Law and Public Policy, Human Settlements and Architecture will function at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and will prefigure eventual professional schools. Graduates of these programmes will be qualified for further study, or employment, anywhere in the world or in Pakistan. The objective of the new undergraduate Faculty, however, is to equip young men and women from within and outside the *umma*, with the skills, ethical commitment and leadership qualities for their future careers wherever they choose. My great hope and prayer is that, in time to come, the Aga Khan University will be only one of hundreds of universities in the Muslim world that are on the frontiers of scientific and humanistic knowledge, radiating intelligence and confidence, research and graduates, into flourishing economies and progressive legal and political systems.

These aspirations I hold for the Aga Khan University but I also hold them for our new graduates. As with AKU, I hope you, our 2003 graduates, continue to be restless researchers and learners. I hope that you, like AKU, will, with broadened international and cultural horizons, recall the heritage of Muslim civilisations past, and discover that change and progress take time, but that they also require impatience!

Thank you.

## **Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Foundation Stone Ceremony of The Ismaili Centre, Dushanbe, 30th August 2003**

Your Excellency President Rahmonov,  
Your Worship the Mayor of Dushanbe,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

Today's ceremony represents a milestone in the history of the Ismaili Muslim Community's presence in Central Asia, a presence which dates back to the second century of Islam. For me personally, as the 49th hereditary Imam of the Ismailis, this is a day of great happiness.

It is also fitting that the foundation ceremony of a landmark cultural and religious centre should coincide with the celebration of the one thousandth anniversary of the birth of Syedna Nasir-i-Khusraw.

Bequeathing a legacy, that to this day enlightens the region's intellectual traditions, Nasir Khusraw was among the premier thinkers whose contributions will be celebrated in the space that we initiate today.

The passage of a millennium has not diminished Nasir Khusraw's relevance nor dulled the lustre of his poetry. It continues to uplift and inspire, reminding us that we are the authors of our own destiny. As he has said, we can be like a poplar tree which chooses to remain barren, or we can let our path be lit by the candle of wisdom, for only "with intellect, we can seek out all the hows and whys. Without it, we are but trees without fruit."

Another lesson that we learn from this great philosopher is that, in the ebb and flow of history, "knowledge is a shield against the blows of time". It dispels "the torment of ignorance" and nourishes "peace to blossom forth in the soul". It is this legacy, like the gifts of other thinkers of Central Asia, that this new Centre will seek to serve.

I am grateful for the presence here today of His Excellency President Rahmonov and of other high dignitaries of State, as also His Worship Mayor Ubaidulloev and the civic leadership of the City of Dushanbe. I take this opportunity to acknowledge their vital support and consistent encouragement in the search for this site and the conception of this project.

I acknowledge with gratitude their steadfast commitment in realising my deep aspiration to establish a centre that will recognise and promote the plurality of traditions and forms of expression to which Central Asia has been a welcoming home and eminent crossroads over the centuries. It is my hope, Your Excellency and Your Worship, that this Centre will play a role in reminding the world of a fact, alas, too often ignored or misunderstood: that Central Asian traditions of spirituality and learning have had a lasting and positive impact on civilisations far beyond their own.

In this light, it is appropriate that the new Ismaili Centre will be sited near thoroughfares named after Ismail Somoni and Rudaki. The Samanid patronage of Rudaki as also of Firdawsi, al-Biruni and Ibn-Sina, amongst other giants of learning, is an inheritance of which we have many reminders throughout the city of Dushanbe. Theirs is a legacy that has inspired achievement well beyond their time into the present day, and in whose revitalisation, I hope, the Ismaili Centre in Dushanbe will play a role.

The recent history of this entire region has been one of considerable change and turmoil. Fortunately, wisdom has prevailed, ushering in a period of peace, reconstruction and renewal, rendering even more tolerant, more open and more inclusive, a valued heritage.

It is my earnest hope that the creation of the Ismaili Centre in Dushanbe will contribute to this endeavour. Its design will draw inspiration from the magnificent landscapes of this region, but also from its architecture, construction techniques, materials, and decorative traditions. In seeking to enliven the encounter of the past with the future and foster a mutually rewarding



dialogue between tradition and modernity, the Centre will attempt to reflect lessons from structures both monumental and mundane, from spaces both religious and social.

The Centre will seek to provide a place where people will come together to share their creativity and their wisdom. Above all, it will be a place for contemplation, upliftment, and the search for spiritual enlightenment.

Beginning in 1984, major Ismaili Centres have been established in London, Vancouver and Lisbon. Others are in advanced planning stages in Toronto and Dubai. It is my hope that, consistent like these others, the Ismaili Centre, Dushanbe will enhance the process of understanding and exchange. Through the facilities which they offer for lectures, presentations, conferences, recitals and exhibitions, alone or in collaboration with other national or international entities, the Ismaili Centres have become important cultural institutions.

These Centres serve to reflect, illustrate and represent the Community's intellectual and spiritual understanding of Islam, its social conscience, its organisation, its forward outlook and its positive attitude towards the societies in which it lives.

I spoke earlier of the process of reconstruction and renewal in this region. Like its neighbours, Tajikistan is in a stage of profound transition which brings in its wake its own challenges and opportunities, calling upon the nation's reserves of patience, courage and foresight. This transition is occurring at a time of economic globalisation and an acceleration in the growth and spread of new knowledge and technology. Among others, these factors require societies to enhance their capacities to adjust, adapt, innovate and invest.

Even the materially rich countries are rethinking the notion of the State and are emphasising the State's role in helping to free and mobilise the energy and creativity of civil society to meet the challenges of development.

The importance of private initiative has become clearly evident in economic development. In addition, the not-for-profit or non-commercial contribution is increasingly being recognised as indispensable in the face of the phenomenon of market failure, and the limits on what the state can provide by way of social services.

A richly diverse yet purposefully united citizenry is capable of making a critical contribution to social development in the struggle against poverty.

It is heartening that, here in Tajikistan, Your Excellency's government is encouraging best practice along these lines. The Ismaili Imamate stands shoulder to shoulder with the Government and people of Tajikistan as they seek to steer a way towards equitable and sustainable national development.

From the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance through the creation of institutional capacity in the fields of health, education, agriculture, microfinance, infrastructure and culture, the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network have striven steadily to improve the quality of life of this region's populations.

Like its counterparts elsewhere, the Ismaili Centre in Dushanbe will stand for the ethics that uphold the dignity of man as the noblest of creation. It will bring down walls that divide and build bridges that unite. These are the ethics that inspire the work of the Aga Khan Development Network.

It is my prayer that, once it has been built, the Ismaili Centre in Dushanbe will be a place of order, of peace, of hope, of humility and of brotherhood, radiating those thoughts, and attitudes which unite us in the search for a better life.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum  
(Dushanbe, Tajikistan)  
30 August 2003**

Your Excellency President Rakhmonov  
Your Excellency Prime Minister Akilov  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak at the beginning of this important conference: the Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum.

To you President Rakhmanov I offer my congratulations and thanks for your initiative to move the United Nations to declare 2003 as the International Year of Fresh Water. Your efforts have already resulted in important meetings around the world, the outcomes of which will be presented this afternoon. The Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum brings together specialists in the management and development of water resources from an international and regional perspective, in the special context of Central Asia.

I also commend your government for structuring this meeting to enable a broader segment of the people of Tajikistan to be exposed to these proceedings. Broad awareness and appreciation of the importance of the intelligent use of a progressively scarce resource is certainly part of the solution to the problems that the Forum will be wrestling with over the next three days.

From a global perspective, it is here, in Central Asia, that one of the most unusual water situations exists. I am referring to Lake Sarez. It is some 60 kilometres in length, containing some 17 cubic kilometres of water, is at 3200 meters altitude and has a natural dam of 550 meters, the highest of any dam in the world. For years it has been seen as a major hazard to millions of lives in this country and in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. It is clear that if the rock dam, caused by an enormous landslide following an earthquake in 1911, were to break as a result of another such event; or if another earthquake were to cause landslides to fall into the lake, raising the level of the water and causing a massive spill across the top of the dam, the consequence would be a major catastrophe. It is estimated that 5 million lives could be at risk.

Fear of this happening has dominated the thinking of government officials and the population living in the area around and below Lake Sarez for years. More recently the World Bank, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), USAID and the Swiss Government have expended time, thought and resources to develop a credible protective response that can alert downstream populations as quickly as possible. In simple terms, this is risk management. The question I wish to raise today is whether we are not perhaps also facing a question of opportunity management. Thousands of cubic meters of consumable water are trapped at high altitude. Is this not a situation which could be turned into a force for development, rather than a threat of tragedy? Studies are presently underway to test this idea, in particular in regard to the use of the Sarez Lake waters for hydro energy and irrigation for the area they now threaten, and probably much more. Any wisdom that this conference could bring to bear on these issues would be an extremely valuable outcome.

The other point I would like to stress is also about water management, but at more micro but still critically important human scale. I will do so because it is here, and in the nearby mountainous region of Northern Pakistan, that the AKDN has acquired much of its understanding of the importance of water management in physically difficult and fragile settings. This engagement now stretches over a period of more than twenty years in Pakistan, and ten years in Tajikistan. It has allowed the Network to develop its knowledge of the utilisation of this precious and scarce resource at the level of communities and watersheds.

This work has demonstrated that with support, mountain populations can enhance and maintain freshwater in a manner that contributes effectively to their increased well-being on

an ongoing basis. At the same time, the use of water by these communities can be designed to be ecologically and socially responsible from the perspective of downstream communities, watersheds and even countries, that are equally dependent on adequate supplies of fresh water. I wish to make this point as I am struck how often, and in how many different discussions about water, people living in the communities scattered through the high mountains are seen as a problem.

I will not take your time to detail AKDN's experience with the development of irrigation, micro and mini hydroelectric plants, the planting of trees and hedgerows for fuel and land stabilisation and the like. Though essential, the technology is not the important message here. It is that with organisational support and technical inputs, mountain people can become part of the solution to effective watershed conservation and management, while also improving their own circumstances.

But, mountain communities need support from society and government at the national level. For much of Central Asia, but also in rural areas in Afghanistan and Northern Pakistan, civil society organisations based on principles of broad participation, equity and transparency are still uncommon. Their development needs support and requires legitimacy in the eyes of the government for they are the most capable micro managers of micro water resources. I know that in matters such as Lake Sarez, or the effective management by rural communities of their water resources, there are issues that require careful analysis. My purpose this morning has been to make two basic points. We must think creatively about the potential that Lake Sarez represents, while also attending to continuing issues of risk. It is equally essential to stress that the people living in mountain communities can be active participants in developments that will sustain and improve the supply of fresh water that is so vital to human life.

Thank you and best wishes for a productive set of deliberations over the next three days.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan Annual Meeting of The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 5th May 2003**

President Lemierre  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to have the opportunity to join the participants in the Annual Meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Tashkent this year. I would like to thank President Karimov for his gracious welcome. It is with pleasure that I am visiting Uzbekistan again.

It is a particular honour to have been invited to deliver the Jacques de Larosiere Lecture to such a distinguished gathering. It is, I must admit, an honour that I accepted with considerable trepidation. My first reaction was to question whether I would have anything to say that would be of interest to this audience. Unlike those who have presented the Larosiere Lecture in previous years, I am neither an economist, a banker, nor a specialist in national or international finance.

But I have been involved in the field of development for nearly four decades. This engagement has been grounded in my responsibilities as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Community, and Islam's message of the fundamental unity of "din and dunya", of spirit and of life. Throughout its long history, the Ismaili Imamate has emphasised the importance of activities that reflect the social conscience of Islam, that contribute to the well being of Allah's greatest creation - mankind, and the responsibility which Islam places on the fortunate and the strong to assist those less fortunate.

When I became Imam in 1957, I was faced with developing a system to meet my responsibilities in an organised and sustainable manner that was suited to the circumstances, demands and opportunities of the second half of the twentieth century. In a period of decolonisation in Asia and Africa, the Cold War and its disastrous impact on developing countries, and the painful progress towards a global movement for international development, it became essential that the Imamate's economic and social development efforts be broadened beyond the Ismaili community, to the societies in which they lived. Presently, the Ismaili community of approximately 15 million resides in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

This led me to establish what is now the Aga Khan Development Network (the AKDN), a group of eight agencies with individual mandates, to engage in critical dimensions of development from distinct yet complementary perspectives and the competencies they require. The Network is active in the fields of health, education, civil society enhancement, culture, and economic and rural development, and now has more than three decades of experience working in South Asia and Eastern and Western Africa, and since 1993, has been active in Central Asia. This work started in Tajikistan with humanitarian assistance and then post conflict reconstruction and redevelopment, and has expanded to other countries including Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan more recently. The Network's newest engagement is a major commitment to reconstruction and development in Afghanistan.

Time and experience have taught us a number of lessons, which you may already know, but which explain why our development agencies are structured in number and purpose as they are.

Development is a multifaceted process that:

- must be approached from multiple perspectives, and competencies;
- necessitates the mobilisation and development of the capacity of local communities or beneficiaries to take responsibility for activities designed to produce sustained results, and;

- requires long-term engagement with programmes developing into institutions to become permanent and localised.

The structure and operating principles of the Network are a response to this understanding of development. These agencies are all field-based, with a small headquarters staff and drawing on the energies of more than 20,000 employees and volunteers. The long-term perspective and the field driven experience of the AKDN will be the basis of my remarks this afternoon.

I am sure that we can agree that at the most general level, the goal of all development efforts -- be they promoted by governments, national organisations, or international development agencies and institutions -- is to stimulate and facilitate change that is positive in character, significant in impact, long-lasting in consequence, and sustainable into the future. The more complex and difficult question is what does it take to achieve development that meets this aspiration?

Economic development -- increasing the production and consumption of goods and services in the economy, and expanding and improving the quality of employment opportunities for a country's population and its disposable income is certainly critical. I take this as a given, and that is why the Aga Khan Development Network has several agencies whose objectives are the expansion of economic opportunity in selected sectors as a primary objective.

However, it is not at all clear that the quality of life has a direct, one-to-one relationship with the level of production or even the breadth of access to what an economy produces. Without doubt growth plays a central role in the increasing of human welfare and the dignity of life. But other dimensions and challenges to development play at least an equally important role. Unfortunately, many of them are not easily measured in conventional economic terms, nor addressed through usual economic programmes and policies. It is to these aspects of development that I would like to devote most of the rest of my remarks.

I do so for two reasons. The non-economic dimensions of development often escape the attention they deserve because the degree of risk of not doing something is often underestimated. Secondly, when dealt with competently and over time, they actually support and sustain the health of the economy as well as other aspects of society.

From the perspective of forty years of work, and the experience of the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, institutional development stands out as critically important to broad-based sustainable change. By institutional development, I mean the strengthening and refocusing of existing institutions, as well as the creation of new institutions and policies to support them. Because this process takes time, it is also urgent. Institutional development is essential to respond to emergent needs, new opportunities, and persistent gaps if change is to measure up to the standards of being positive, significant, long lasting, sustainable and having a genuinely measurable impact. No country to my knowledge can achieve stable continuous growth if its civil society is constrained by inherent institutional instability.

The need is universal. It exists in big countries and small countries, countries better endowed with natural resources, and those that have less, countries in the developing world, the developed world, and those in transition following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The need for institutional development also applies to every sector of society: to government at all levels, to business large and small, and to that diverse array of informal and formal organisations that have come to be referred to collectively as civil society institutions. One clear lesson of the last half of the twentieth century is that governments cannot do everything. The role of the private business sector in national economies is now universally acknowledged as both critical and legitimate.

But the refocusing of existing institutions and the development of new ones to enter spheres of social activity previously undertaken solely by government is not yet as widely recognised. Nor is there as clear an understanding of what form new institutions might take, and how they should relate to government -- an issue that is at least being addressed with respect to

government's relations with the private business sector, as opposed to the private social sector. There, lack of clarity, or even confusion, dominate the field.

What do I mean when I speak of civil society institutions? Of the three sectors -- government, private business and civil society -- it is the most diverse and the least well understood. Moreover I am not sure that even those who work on the sector define it in the same way. My purpose is not to enter into an academic discussion but only to ensure that I am understood. I prefer to think of civil society in the widest sense, including all sorts of organisations and initiatives. It includes much more for example than is captured by the term NGO. I would for instance include professional organisations that aim to uphold best practices, or that serve and contribute to a vibrant and effective business sector, such as chambers of commerce, and associations of accountants, bankers, doctors, lawyers and the like.

Civil society organisations are generally non-profit or not-for-profit - at least implicitly. They may, however, generate money from fees or services that they provide. This is the source of a great deal of confusion in many parts of the world because non-profit is frequently confused with charity - giving services or sustenance to the needy. The confusion is understandable because charity has a long history in all religious traditions, and renders real assistance to those not able to help themselves. Some civil society institutions should and will always be involved in charity. But those of a new type exist to provide services in return for fees that will cover some or all of the costs of operations including salaries, but not produce a profit for owners or investors. Perhaps "non-commercial" conveys the purpose and operating principles of civil society institutions in many parts of the world, more clearly than the term "non-profit."

Because most civil society institutions are non-commercial, and whatever dividends they produce contribute directly to the improvement of the quality of life of their beneficiaries, these institutions are faced with the fundamental problem of identifying financial resources that will keep them alive and enable them to grow.

At the heart of the issue is the question : "Is civil society bankable?" If so, what criteria should apply? The long history of the AKDN agencies has shown that while there are numerous financial institutions and programmes that are available to support economic investment, non-commercial civil society institutions face the permanent threat of being systematically underfunded. One of the causes, at least from the experience of AKDN is that civil society institutions are rarely, if ever, part of a national planning process. Relations between public sector and private sector health delivery, or education delivery, are more often left to chance than a thought-through process driven by clear development goals. Within the civil society sector there is not even consultation between the providers working on the same problems from different perspectives as to how they might work together for better effectiveness.

In addition, financial institutions find it difficult to rationalise the role, needs and futures of civil society institutions within the national economy. At least in the banking sector, they cannot tailor their financial support systems when available, to the characteristics of non-commercial civil society institutions.

A number of these characteristics are common, such as the need and desire for longevity, incapability to plan growth on the basis of secure long term funding, the need to employ competent people at fair market rates, and in some cases the impossibility or unwillingness to become commercial ventures.

I would like therefore to share with you some specific examples from our own activities here in this region. How does a private sector hospital that has chosen not to offer its services for commercial gain, fund its expansion or the cost of increasingly expensive sophisticated technical equipment? How does a private university fund its expansion into new areas of higher education when student fees will never reasonably cover more than 25% of the cost of running the university? How do you address the now well-recognised problem of pockets of poverty in developing countries, when on the one hand it is clear that they present a real threat of destabilisation, but at the same time have no hope of improving their economic standards, unless a key piece of unbankable infrastructure is built. A good example is the

recently constructed bridge, linking Tajik Badakhshan to Afghan Badakhshan, which could never be justified on the basis of normal banking criteria.

Within civil society in much of the developing world, there are professions which are critical to stable growth and to democracy, but which are systematically under resourced in terms of pay and opportunities for ongoing training. The three that I would cite today are: teachers, nurses and journalists. The economic status of these professions simply has to be corrected if the consequences are not going to be the progressive degradation of education, the progressive degradation of health care, and national media, which will be incompetent or open to all sorts of undesirable pressures including corruption. And yet, the additional costs of better remuneration to such professions will simply add to the end cost of the product, making it even more inaccessible to those who need it most, the poor.

In the developing world the backlog of unmet existing needs combined with those of rapidly growing populations puts incredible pressure on even the most forward-looking, well-resourced and efficient governments. In the countries of the former Soviet Union, the previously high levels of achievement in health and all levels of education are no longer sustainable because governments cannot provide the same levels of subsidies. And in all parts of the world the growing differentiation and specialisation in the fields of health and higher education, demand institutions of a new type, mastery of new areas of knowledge and technology, the capacity to innovate, and the identification of new sources of funding. Not even the governments of the richest countries in the world can meet these challenges without contributions from the private business and the civil society sectors.

Civil society organisations need to reach for the highest level of competence to justify their support. The sector combines energy, creativity, with a social conscience. Together these constitute a powerful impulse and should be nurtured. At the same time capacities for management, programme design and implementation, fundraising, and self-study and evaluation need to be strengthened. The process of learning from the experiences of the sector is important for the organisations themselves, and for government, international development agencies, universities and even the private business sector. How can we improve the process of self-analysis, evaluation and the exchange of experiences without diminishing the autonomy and creative initiative of civil society institutions? How can they learn from their own experiences in order to improve the management of their programmes?

But the Network's experience also reveals that the civil society sector faces a number of challenges that must be addressed if it is going to make an effective and continuing contribution to national development in this region. Even when needs are readily evident, the sector's role and potential are not well understood. There are questions about its legitimacy, there is no framework, no predictable and reliable environment in which civil society organisations can function and prosper. There is often a lack of clarity about to whom, and for what, it is responsible and accountable, and there is little appreciation as to how it is and can be financed, and its sustainability. How should these civil society institutions be governed? What standards should be applied to define their success?

Governments, donor agencies and others need to do more to create an environment that enables civil society institutions to emerge and develop. The basic issue is how to improve mutual understanding and create the conditions of confidence, and mutual predictability that will enable people and institutions to realise their full potential. There are some larger contextual issues that are critical as well.

The first is regional cooperation, a subject that has been mentioned at various points in the programme over the last two days, although primarily in terms of its economic consequences. The last few years have seen the emergence of groupings of neighbouring countries coming together to promote trade and broader economic relations. This is critically important for Central Asia as well, and can build on the demography of the region and elements of common culture that have developed over extended periods of time as symbolised by the Silk Road. Central Asia is still well situated to play an important role between Europe, China and the Indian sub continent. That role will be more important and have greater impact if the countries of the region can find ways to develop their economies and resources on a cooperative basis

rather than as individual nations. But why restrict this cooperation to the commercial domain only? Many civil society needs are clearly regional, hence our creation of the University of Central Asia in partnership with the governments of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic to provide education specialised in high mountain studies on a regional basis.

Pluralism, the recognition of people of diverse backgrounds and interests, organisations of different types and projects, different kinds and forms of creative expression, are all valuable and therefore deserving of recognition and support by government and society as a whole. Without support for pluralism, civil society does not function. Pluralism is also essential for peace, a statement that is unfortunately documented by armed conflict in contexts of cultural, ethnic, or religious differences on almost every continent at this time. It is of particular importance here in Central Asia given the demography of most countries.

The purpose of my comments today is not to point an accusing finger at international or national banking systems. Nor do I want to appear ungrateful for the generous assistance we have received from our donor-partners over the last many years. I do want to share with you however, my deep conviction drawn from years of experience, that financial support systems for non-commercial civil society institutions, do not exist in certain countries, or are insufficient, or are ill-adapted to the needs of such institutions.

If the international financial community were willing to look in depth at the problems that should be addressed in supporting non-commercial civil society institutions, some strategic goals should be set. The first one that I would propose to you is to ensure that as civil society grows it does so in a manner that it enhances public appreciation of the diversity of most people within common frontiers as an asset and not a liability. Events in recent years have shown in Eastern Europe, in the great lakes area of Africa, in numerous countries in Asia, including Afghanistan and Tajikistan, that there is a central need for these societies to develop in a way that each group within them feels valued and respected, and is encouraged to contribute to the goal of national development.

I do not believe that most people are born into an understanding or an environment where pluralism is seen as an asset, but on the other hand I am convinced that civil society institutions have a central role to play in bringing value to pluralism and inclusiveness. But again, who will fund the tools with which pluralism will find its way into civil society, as a central necessity for civilised life in the future?

Thank you for hearing me out. I was not invited here to speak to you about banking, though I clearly understand and admire the purpose of EBRD, which is development through economic stimulation. Creating a sound future for the peoples of Central Asia requires just as much in my view, a clear focus on building new concepts and new institutions for new civil societies.



## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Ceremony to Inaugurate the Restored Humayun's Tomb Gardens, New Delhi, India - 15 April, 2003**

Your Excellency, Shri Jagmohan, Minister for Tourism and Culture  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

I would like to begin by expressing my warmest gratitude to the Government for inviting me to India, and to the Minister for Tourism and Culture, His Excellency Shri Jagmohan, for honouring this inaugural ceremony with his presence.

We are gathered today, near the twilight hour, surrounded by the signs of paradise, at what is clearly a defining moment in world history. The need for better understanding across cultures has never been greater - nor more pressing, the requirement to recognise, value, and protect what is greatest in our common heritage.

Breathing new life into the legacy of past civilisations calls for a creativity, imagination, tolerance, understanding, and wisdom well beyond the ordinary.

These are some of the qualities that we celebrate in the collaborative outcome represented by the project being inaugurated today.

Conceived in 1997 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of India's independence, the restoration of the gardens of Humayun's Tomb was formalised two years later. Implementation began in 2001 and was completed yesterday.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India recognised in this project a symbol of Indian history and of the world's cultural heritage. The role of the National Culture Fund also has to be acknowledged.

The task has been a vast one. Water channels were re-laid to such exacting standards that their beds rise only one centimetre every 40 metres. Over 2500 trees and plants were introduced in accordance with our knowledge of the original palette of landscaping. Wells were re-excavated and incorporated into a rainwater harvesting and irrigation system. Sixty stonecutters prepared 2,000 meters of hand-dressed red sandstone slabs.

These restored gardens are the first chahar-bagh, or four-part paradise garden to surround a Mughal tomb on the sub-continent. Built nearly a century before the Taj Mahal, the Tomb and its gardens were an expression of the love and respect borne towards the Emperor Humayun by his son, Akbar and widow, Haji Begum. The chahar-bagh was more than a pleasure garden. In the discipline and order of its landscaped geometry, its octagonal or rectangular pools, its selection of favourite plants and trees, it was an attempt to create transcendent perfection - a glimpse of paradise on earth.

The hues and scents of these gardens, the varied sources of the design elements and of the chosen construction materials, make this monument an important reminder of the power and elegance of diversity, while the sentiments that moved its patrons, united them in a shared virtue.

Revitalisation clearly is not just about replacing stones or replanting lawns. It is a process underpinned by careful research, in the present instance, drawing on archives in India as well as abroad. The project had to draw upon many disciplines - archaeological excavation, conservation science, soil analysis, stone carving, and civil and hydraulic engineering. It also benefited from, and contributed to, the skills of local artisans. Where encroachments had obscured and diminished the grandeur that was once enjoyed by all, we have, together, restored a glory that now becomes ours again.

Endeavours such as this are vital for countries like India, well-endowed with historical and cultural treasures, but also burdened by the responsibility of preserving them for future generations. It is my hope that this project will serve as a model for more collaborative

ventures among the private and public sector, national and international entities and civil society.

Speaking of civil society, central to my broader concern is the fact that investing in such cultural initiatives represents an opportunity to improve the quality of life for the people who live around these remarkable inheritances of past great civilizations. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture insists that each of its conservation and restoration projects should be able to have an important positive impact on that quality of life. We are keen that our investments create a multiplier effect in the local economy. Accordingly, we monitor their impact on the physical environment as well as on disposable income and other indices of better living conditions. We also emphasise self-sustainability.

Here, as with the Trust's other urban projects such as in Cairo, Kabul and Zanzibar - a significant long term outcome will be the enhancing of the quality of leisure for residents and visitors alike.

A richer educational encounter at a sensitively restored monument will prompt more tourists to seek out other culturally significant sites in India.

These restored gardens can thus become the fulcrum and catalyst for socio-economic development as well as an irreplaceable resource for education.

I spoke a few minutes ago of this juncture in history, of reviving a legacy and of shared aspirations. Whether through neglect or willful destruction, the disappearance of physical traces of the past deprives us of more than memories. Spaces that embody historic realities remind us of the lessons of the past. They constitute valuable national assets but also represent the patrimony of mankind.

And, as we witnessed most poignantly across Afghanistan and now in Iraq, the very survival of so much of this heritage is today at risk.

What, then, of the deeper values that we risk abandoning under the dust of our own indifference, or that might be crushed to rubble by our own destructive human forces?

In the troubled times in which we live, it is important to remember, and honour, a vision of a pluralistic society. Tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, social structures, values and faiths are now essential to the very survival of an interdependent world. Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for progress and development, it is vital to our existence. Never perhaps more so than at the present time, must we renew with vigour our creative engagement in revitalising shared heritage through collaborative ventures such as the project we are inaugurating today.

Thank you.

## **Keynote Speech by His Highness at the Plenary Session of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 31 October 2002**

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Tanaev  
Your Excellency, Ambassador Gautschi  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour to be one of the participants in this distinguished gathering. I am pleased to be part of a meeting dedicated to the search for new solutions to the problems and potentials of the mountains and mountain people. Looking back over the events of the last decade yields several lessons. One of the most important is that the global community cannot continue to ignore the problems that have been building in most mountain areas of the world.

It is most fitting that this Summit, the culminating event of the United Nations Year of the Mountains, should be held here in Bishkek.

- The Kyrgyz Republic is a mountainous country, located in a region dominated by some of the world's mightiest mountain ranges. For this reason President Akaev took the initiative, more than two years ago to move the General Assembly of the United Nations to dedicate the year 2002 as the Year of the Mountains.
- He saw it as a means to concentrate attention on the role that mountains and mountain communities play in local economies as well as their global consequences for climate, the supply of critical natural resources, and peace and security. The presence here of representatives from governments, private business, non-government organisations, universities, and international development agencies demonstrates that his objectives are being achieved.
- President Akaev, I would like to add my voice to those of the speakers at the opening plenary, in thanking you for the initiative you have taken to bring this meeting to Bishkek, for the warm welcome and the excellent arrangements.

Presentations and discussions over the past two days have detailed the complex problems confronting sustainable development in mountain areas. I will not take your time by repeating what has already been said. Dealing with the problems is particularly difficult for developing countries where resources for investment are always insufficient and subject to intense competition from many sides, often for other worthwhile and pressing needs.

These problems have been especially acute here in Central Asia over the last decade.

- Most of the countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union have experienced rapid and severe stagnation as their economies were cut off from the highly centralised Soviet economic system.
- The effects of this change were magnified in mountain areas. Few were self sufficient in basic foodstuffs, and their industries and mines -- already inefficient -- were cut off from their markets. Even educational and health services, which had been accessible and good, collapsed because they had been dependent on high subsidies.
- The struggle to survive brought some immediate results -- many with more than short-term consequences. I will give just two examples. The cut off of imported and subsidised fuel led to the massive cutting of trees and shrubs to provide heat during the bitterly cold winters. Herds of livestock, once a major export, were decimated for food in the absence of alternatives.
- The years of armed conflict have further exacerbated these conditions, in Tajikistan and even more notably in Afghanistan.

The Aga Khan Development Network (which I will refer to as the AKDN) has developed considerable experience working in mountain communities. It has been active in the Northern Areas of Pakistan for over twenty years, and in parts of Tajikistan for over a decade. This year the Network is bringing this experience to bear in northeastern Afghanistan, and next year plans to begin a programme in the mountainous districts of Osh Oblast here in the Kyrgyz Republic.

A fundamental premise of the AKDN is that development is a multifaceted process that must be approached from multiple perspectives and requires long-term engagement. The structure and approach of the Network is a response to this understanding of development. It is comprised of a number of agencies with specific mandates and expertise. The work of the non-profit entities ranges across the fields of health, education, economic development, rural development, and culture. Activities include the provision of social services, field based development activities and educational programmes and universities that train professionals at the highest level. Building institutions and human resources to operate on a sustained basis is one of AKDN's most important goals. The for-profit group takes equity positions and management responsibilities in companies that contribute to overall development.

AKDN's work in mountain communities has shown that attention to a combination of critical elements at the field level can make a powerful difference. These factors include:

- working with or creating community organisations that can progressively operate on their own,
- providing matching funds for community level infrastructure projects, selected and built in large measure by the community,
- supplying credit and improved inputs to agriculturalists, and
- providing technical assistance to support agriculture and construction projects.

In the case of Tajikistan, land reform that gave farmers secure access to their land was an additional, very important element.

These experiences have yielded many valuable lessons.

- To succeed, programmes have to be grounded in field experience, with trained personnel situated throughout the area.
- All factors require support over an extended period of time. Community organisations need to gain experience and develop strength.
- It is easier to improve agricultural production, and thereby income and nutritional levels, than it is to create agriculture-related and non-agricultural jobs in rural areas.
- Improving access to the quality of health and education services is essential. They support the diversification of the local economy, and equip those looking for work outside the mountains on a seasonal or long-term basis to be considered for new forms of employment.
- In many areas it is also possible to revitalise or strengthen cultural assets – be they buildings, musical forms, or crafts -- as potential attractions or products for those tourists interested in mountains and mountain cultures. The point was made in the opening plenary that mountain areas have the highest level of bio-diversity of any ecological zone. It is equally true that mountains have more cultural diversity than any other physical setting. This is a great source of strength and an asset and should be supported as such.
- It is clear that improved livelihoods and functional communities are much more attractive to mountain people than armed conflict or criminal activities, including drugs.

But however well-designed community-based, integrated development programmes may be, they need support from strong institutions to evolve and good policies to move beyond what they can cumulatively achieve.

Institutional support is required to provide ongoing inputs explicitly focussed on the problems and potentials of mountains and mountain peoples. The challenge of improving agricultural

production and productivity on a sustained basis illustrates this readily. While mountain regions share many problems, the solutions are often very specific to particular micro niches, even within one area. Grains, horticulture and the cultivation of specialised plants for medicinal and other specialised purposes require careful selection in order to succeed.

This requires field-based knowledge and capacity, as well as the means to mobilise the best science that is relevant, wherever it can be found. It will require the ability to undertake highly contextualised research, as well as the delivery capacity to bring that research to the field in a form that can be utilized in field conditions. Unfortunately, as the Director General of UNESCO stated in his plenary address, there are very few universities and research institutions located in mountain areas.

Research and training of this type – applied to the whole range of knowledge and human resources needed to support mountain development, is one of the premises for the creation of the University of Central Asia. The university came into being following the signing of a treaty between the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the Ismaili Imamate two years ago, and ratified by the parliaments of the three countries over the course of last year. From campuses located in mountain towns in the three countries, it will conduct a wide range of activities designed to serve the mountain peoples of the region.

I would like to move to a topic, which I do not think is receiving enough attention here at the Summit and in other Year of the Mountain fora. In Central Asia there are problems and unrealised potentials that can only be addressed by involving two or more countries, or working on a truly regional basis. This, as has already been pointed out, must be due at least in part, to the irrationality of national boundaries.

But tackling regional issues will require effort at political and diplomatic levels in each country involved, and they will in turn require facilitation and support from multilateral organisations to move negotiations forward. Truly regional projects will also require financial assistance that supports such efforts directly – not as an aggregation of individually financed, single country activities. The need to build and improve roads and bridges in sensitive and neglected border areas are particularly critical.

I would be worried if the rational economic theories that support the benefits of regionalisation were only that: theoretical rationalisations. However, at least in the case of AKDN's high mountain activities I should share one last lesson with you that was recently highlighted in AKDN's most mature rural support programme.

At what stage does the compound impact of community based projects over a wide area and an extended period of time cumulate into the need for macro economic changes? In our high mountain situations, this equates with new regional dimensions. Even when demonstrably successful, community-based projects seem to reach a development stage at which they no longer produce continuing increments in returns.

It would appear that when that point is attained, much wider forces of change have to be brought into play, such as mobilizing new economic drivers and diversifying the economy at the macro level. New areas and scales of enterprise in fields such as commerce, agro-industry, the leisure industry and others must be developed. There are new needs for regional institutions such as universities, enterprise support agencies, micro-credit banks and the like. Improved communications, better roads and appropriate customs and border regimes take on a new urgency. They in turn must seek out new levels of funding and diplomatic support that only large international funding agencies can offer.

In AKDN's experience they unfortunately are generally unenthusiastic about funding regional initiatives. But in economic theory, and from the practical experience of AKDN's high mountain development programmes, the case for regional development initiatives and their institutionalisation is made.

There is of course, more that can be said about building institutions to respond to new needs and constraints but I will stop here. AKDN looks to partner with other institutions to move this

process forward. Much remains to be done to stabilise mountain communities, and improve the options and therefore the future for mountain peoples. It will take the best efforts of all of us to make a difference for them.

Thank you.

**Speech By His Highness the Aga Khan at the Opening Ceremony  
of the Aga Khan School, Osh, Kyrgyz Republic, 30th October 2002**

Your Excellency Governor Kasiev  
Your Excellency Minister Aitmatov  
Honourable Mayor Satibaldive  
Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be here in Osh today and to participate in the opening ceremony of this new Aga Khan School. I thank you for being here to share this important moment with us. It is an occasion of great significance in many ways. It is significant because of the cooperation many organisations and individuals who have made the establishment of the school and construction of this complex of buildings possible.

- The government, at all levels -- national, provincial and local -- have made important contributions, both symbolic and very practical. Their Excellencies President Akayev and Governor Kasiev have provided encouragement throughout the process for which I am very grateful. The support provided to a private school is a visible demonstration of the government's commitment to private initiatives in the Kyrgyz Republic and a testament to its openness and flexibility.
- Special mention should be made of the role of the authorities in Osh in finding a way to make the land available for the school, and of the Ministry of Education for the expeditious issuing of the licenses for its construction and operation.
- The Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Pakistan, deserves mention for its many contributions to the conception and implementation of the building project.
- I would also like to recognise the contributions of the architects and the general contractor for their ongoing efforts to complete a project that involves a number of firsts in terms of design and construction.

But the significance of this occasion extends beyond the establishment and opening of the school. The aspirations of the Aga Khan Education Services for what this school will achieve for its faculty and staff and above all for its students and their parents in the years ahead is perhaps the most important dimension.

I am sure that all of you here today will agree that we live in a time of rapid change -- change that is often not predictable, and not always positive. The best way to manage change, whether positive or negative, is to anticipate it and prepare for it. On the basis of my experience with development as an observer and a practitioner - that now spans more than forty years - I have come to the conclusion that there is no greater form of preparation for change than education. I also think that there is no better investment that the individual, parents, and the nation can make than an investment in education of the highest possible quality.

But education comes in many forms, and has been used for many purposes. An education for success in the modern world must be enabling and it must be outward looking. It must not only teach the time tested skills of reading, writing, and mathematics, which remain important, and must not only build on Central Asia's fine tradition of encouraging students to master more than one language. Today's students need to learn to use computers. The ability to use communication and information technology is now a critical part of the learning, as well as an essential qualification for eventual application in the workplace.

But even this is not enough. There are two more dimensions of education for the modern world about which I would like to make a few remarks. The first relates to inquisitiveness, critical thinking, and problem solving. What students know is no longer the most important measure of the quality of education. The true test is the ability to engage with what they do not know, and to work out a solution. The second dimension involves the ability to reach conclusions that constitutes the basis for informed judgements. The ability to make judgements that are grounded in solid information, and employ careful analysis should be one of the most important goals for any educational endeavour. As students develop this

capacity, they can begin to grapple with the most important and difficult step: to learn to place such judgements in an ethical framework. Therein lies the formation of the kind of social consciousness that our world so desperately needs.

I hasten to add that these capacities cannot be developed quickly, nor can they be mastered at the high school level. But a beginning must be made, and starting this process should be part of the mission of this institution.

Yet another reason why the opening of the Aga Khan School in Osh today is so important. It is because of what it represents in terms of the Aga Khan Development Network, its work around the world, in Central Asia and in the Kyrgyz Republic.

- Being part of the Aga Khan Education Services' network means having access to a system of more than 300 high quality schools in various parts of the world, access to high quality training for teachers and school managers at the Institute of Educational Development at the Aga Khan University. It also means access to important international partners like Phillips Academy near Boston in the United States. These resources will enrich what this school can offer, and will help it achieve the very high aspirations we have for it and its graduates.
- Later this week I will visit Naryn where the first facilities of the University of Central Asia in the Kyrgyz Republic will be located. The University of Central Asia is the first university in the world dedicated exclusively to the study of the problems and potentials of mountains and mountain people. It is my hope that the school which we are inaugurating here today will, in a few year's time, be a significant contributor to the student body of the University.

In closing I extend my congratulations and best wishes to everyone associated with the school. When I arrived I was reminded that its cornerstone was laid in the year 2000 as part of celebration of the 3000th anniversary of the founding of the city. While the Aga Khan School was not part of that long and glorious history, it is my sincere hope that it will be an important part of this city and the Oblast for a long time into the future.

Thank you.



## **Address at the 25th Anniversary Graduation Ceremony of The Institute of Ismaili Studies**

**His Highness the Aga Khan  
Le Meridien Grosvenor House Hotel  
October 19, 2003**

Bismillah a-Rahman al-Rahim

Distinguished guests,  
The faculty, staff and students of The Institute of Ismaili Studies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me immense happiness to be present at this graduation ceremony of the Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. I genuinely share the joy and pride of everyone associated with this programme, and particularly the graduands. Many of you, with your prior qualifications, have the capacity to pursue different paths in life but, by joining this programme, you have opted to undertake a systematic study of your heritage. I hope that you will feel that this choice has not been in vain, and that what you have learnt will be a source of inspiration and satisfaction in your life, whatever professional path you follow. The studies you have undertaken should, I believe enable you to play a role in helping to address the issues of contemporary relevance to Muslim societies.

The Muslim world today is heir to a faith and a culture that stands among the leading civilisations in the world. The revelation granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) opened new horizons and released new energies of mind and spirit. It became the binding force that held the Muslims together despite the far-flung lands in which they lived, the diverse languages and dialects they spoke, and the multitude of traditions – scientific, artistic, religious and cultural – which went into the making of a distinctive ethos. This message is still potent in the Muslim world today, although it is sometimes clouded, distorted and deformed by political interests and by struggles for power over the minds and hearts of people. There are attempts at transforming what are meant to be fluid, progressive, open-ended, intellectually informed, and spiritually inspired traditions of thought, into hardened, monolithic, absolutist and obscurantist positions. Yet there are many across the length and breadth of the Muslim world today who care for their history and heritage, who are keenly sensitive to the radically altered conditions of the modern world. They are convinced that the idea that there is some inherent, permanent division between their heritage and the world of today is a profoundly mistaken idea; and that the choice it suggests between an Islamic identity on the one hand and on the other hand, full participation in the global order of today is a false choice indeed. They seek for ways in which their societies may benefit from the intellectual and material fruits of modernity, while remaining true to their distinctive moral, spiritual and cultural heritage.

Yet it is not a simple matter for any human society with a concern and appreciation of its history to relate its heritage to its contemporary conditions. Traditions evolve in a context, and the context always changes, thus demanding a new understanding of essential principles. For us Muslims, this is one of the pressing challenges we face. In what voice or voices can the Islamic heritage speak to us afresh - a voice true to the historical experience of the Muslim world yet, at the same time, relevant in the technically advanced but morally turbulent and uncertain world of today?

One of the challenges that has concerned me over many years, and which I have discussed with leading Muslim thinkers, is how education for Muslims can reclaim the inherent strengths that, at the height of their civilisations, equipped Muslim societies to excel in diverse areas of human endeavour.

Clearly the intellectual development of the *umma*, is, and should remain, a central goal to be pursued with urgency if we wish the Muslim world to regain its rightful place in world civilisation. Today, any reasonably well-informed observer would be struck by how deeply this

brotherhood of Muslims is divided. On the opposite sides of the fissures are the ultra-rich and the ultra-poor; the Shi'a and the Sunni; the theocracies and the secular states, the search for normalisation versus the appreciation of pluralism; those who search for and are keen to adopt modern, participatory, forms of government versus those who wish to re-impose supposedly ancient forms of governance. What should have been brotherhood has become rivalry, generosity has been replaced by greed and ambition, the right to think is held to be the enemy of real faith, and anything we might hope to do to expand the frontiers of human knowledge through research is doomed to failure for in most of the Muslim world, there are neither the structures nor the resources to develop meaningful intellectual leadership.

You will forgive me, I hope, for presenting to you such a grey picture of where we in the *umma* stand today, but, unless we have the courage to face unpleasant reality, there is no way that we can aspire realistically to a better future.

Several days ago, at a meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Malaysia, it was pointed out that the only way the *umma* can work its way out of its present sad state is to harness the intellect. I deeply share this conviction, but three immediate questions follow: How do we foster intellectual development in the *umma*? In what areas of human knowledge should we seek to lead? And where should we source our education?

It is in an endeavour to address such critical questions relating to education that the Ismaili Imamate has undertaken a number of initiatives.

The Aga Khan University was founded in Pakistan in 1983 and today its academic activities radiate into Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and the United Kingdom. In 2001, an international treaty between the Ismaili Imamate and the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, resulted in the establishment of the University of Central Asia, which aspires to impact the intelligentsia of the whole mountainous region of Central Asia with campuses in these countries. This University will study developmental issues specific to high mountain societies, while also offering courses in the humanities to promote respect for cultural pluralism and strengthen the foundations of civil society.

Last year, I took the decision to launch a network of Schools of Excellence in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and South East Asia, with the aim of educating young men and women up to the highest international standards from primary through higher secondary education. It is my hope that, in due course, these schools will be located in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Madagascar, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, Syria and, in due course, Mali. Students and faculty will be encouraged to move through this school system which, of course, will need to be residential, so that the graduates have been exposed to different social, ethnic and religious environments, have become bilingual and, perhaps, trilingual, and will be equipped to lead in the professions in the societies in which they decide to establish themselves, whether or not they go to the best universities in their own countries, or the best universities in the Western world. The students' areas of specialisation will be in the fields of knowledge most required for the development of their societies, home countries and regions, but they will also have a strong grounding in the humanities, and in particular the cultures of the Muslim world. They will be fully qualified in the use of modern information technologies, and thus wherever they are, they will have easy and quick access to the world's most sophisticated knowledge bases, wherever they may be. The graduates' beliefs, practices, ethics and social norms will be those of their own societies, and their own cultures, and their value systems will be rooted in their own histories, and their own arts.

As these young men and women grow into leadership positions in their own societies, including teaching future generations through their schools and universities, it is my hope that it will be these new generations of our intelligentsia, who, driven by their own knowledge and their own inspiration, will change their own societies and will gradually replace many of the external forces who today appear, and indeed sometimes seek, to control our destinies. These young men and women will become leaders in the institutions of civil society in their own countries, in international organisations, and in all those institutions, academic, economic and others, which cause positive change in our world.

As more nations develop increasingly multi-cultural rather than uniform or monolithic profiles, and as the process of globalisation continues apace, educators are confronted by the challenge to provide to the mainstream population of their society, an informed understanding of the culture and history of minorities domiciled in their midst, as well as other major civilisations beyond their shores.

It must be said that, in this respect, most of the countries of the West have been staggeringly slow to face up to this challenge, at least as far as Islam is concerned. The media and some opinion-leaders tend, if not to actively perpetrate old clichés and stereotypes, show a lack of anything like a nuanced knowledge or appreciation of the traditions of the Muslim world. School curricula in the humanities and social sciences are often formulated as if Islam did not exist or was not the religion and culture of a substantial portion of humanity. As a result, even a distant acquaintance with the world of Islam is nearly totally absent from the general knowledge of Western society. Undergraduate courses in universities, when describing and evaluating major achievements in the arts, sciences, philosophy, religion and ethics, refer almost exclusively to figures in European or American history. Indeed, Islamic studies have been mostly relegated to the minute and often-unheard minority of academic specialists in Western universities.

In an effort to address these concerns, the Aga Khan Development Network is working closely with a number of leading North American Universities and State educational authorities with a view to developing and implementing appropriate school curricula on Islam. In a related, though separate, initiative, the Ismaili Imamat is currently in the process of establishing a museum in Toronto as a significant resource for disseminating information and education about Islam's vast and varied heritage, and its interface with the many cultures in which it has evolved.

These and other initiatives, including The Institute of Ismaili Studies, are a continuation of the historic Ismaili tradition to promote knowledge and learning, in line with the great ideals of Islam.

To the graduands, past and present, I convey my very warm congratulations on this special day. I also wish you well in whatever careers you now choose to pursue. Among the options that you may consider are, for example, teaching at the Aga Khan University, particularly at the College of Arts and Sciences when it opens its doors insh'allah in 2007, at the University of Central Asia or at the Centres of Excellence that the Aga Khan Education Services are currently in the process of establishing. You may also find interest in the major teacher education programme on which the Institute of Ismaili Studies is about to embark, in the context of the secondary level curriculum that has been developed for the *jamat*.

It is my hope and prayer that the education and training that you have acquired will enable you to assume positions of leadership in your communities, countries and even beyond. I believe that your continuing relationship and dialogue with the Institute will enrich your role as potential agents of change, while also extending to the Institute the benefits of your experiences and insights. This partnership can ensure that you are well placed to contribute to the development and growth of future generations of our intelligentsia, so that we strengthen our own capacity to determine our destiny.

Thank you.

## **‘Word of God, Art of Man: The Qur’an and its Creative Expressions’**

**An International Colloquium organised by  
The Institute of Ismaili Studies**

**His Highness the Aga Khan  
The Ismaili Centre, London  
October 19, 2003**

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim

Your Excellencies,  
Your Worship,  
Distinguished Scholars and Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

An assembly of the wise and learned is a privileged occasion. I am, therefore, immensely happy to be with you this morning as you begin your deliberations on a theme which, though of perennial interest, holds a special significance at a time that calls for enlightened encounters among faiths and cultures. Whatever its vernacular forms, the language of art, more so when it is spiritually inspired, can be a positive barrier-transcending medium of discourse, manifesting the depths of the human spirit.

The venue for this international colloquium is particularly appropriate. In its architectural design and definition of broader functions, the Ismaili Centre in London, like its counterparts in other countries, has been conceived in a mood of dialogue, of humility, of friendship and of harmony. These Centres reflect a commitment to premiate excellence of endeavour in the realms of the intellect and the spirit.

I thank you most warmly for setting aside the time from your busy schedules to participate in this colloquium. I also congratulate the Institute of Ismaili Studies for marking the twenty-fifth year since its inauguration through this timely event. This is a part of its ongoing ambitious programme of Qur’anic studies in which scholars from around the world, both Muslim and of other persuasions, are participating. They bring to bear a variety of academic disciplines on a reflection of how Islam’s revelation, with its challenge to man’s innate gift of quest and reason, became a powerful impetus for a new flowering of human civilisation.

This programme is also an opportunity for achieving insights into how the discourse of the Qur’an-e-Sharif, rich in parable and allegory, metaphor and symbol, has been an inexhaustible well-spring of inspiration, lending itself to a wide spectrum of interpretations. This freedom of interpretation is a generosity which the Qur’an confers upon all believers, uniting them in the conviction that All-Merciful Allah will forgive them if they err in their sincere attempts to understand His word. Happily, as a result, the Holy Book continues to guide and illuminate the thought and conduct of Muslims belonging to different communities of interpretation and spiritual affiliation, from century to century, in diverse cultural environments. The Noble Qur’an extends its principle of pluralism also to adherents of other faiths. It affirms that each has a direction and path to which they turn so that all should strive for good works, in the belief that, wheresoever they may be, Allah will bring them together.

Tradition honours the vocation of the learned scholars who are gathered here for this colloquium. The Qur’an itself acknowledges that people upon whom wisdom has been bestowed are the recipients of abundant good; they are the exalted ones. Hence Islam’s consistent encouragement to Muslim men and women to seek knowledge wherever it is to be found. We are all familiar that al-Kindi, even in the 9th century, saw no shame in acknowledging and assimilating the truth, whatever its source. He argued that truth never abases, but only ennobles its seeker. Poetising the Prophet’s teaching, [Nasir Khusraw](#), the 11th century Iranian poet-philosopher, also extols the virtue of knowledge. For him, true *jihad* is the war that must be waged against the perpetrators of bigotry, through spreading

knowledge that dispels the darkness of ignorance and nourishes the seed of peace that is innately embedded in the human soul.

This colloquium covers a range of Muslim expressions in the Arts, across time and space. Some among the eminent scholars present today have observed that, while the Qur'an may not propound a doctrine of Islamic art or material culture, it does offer imaginative scope in this direction. From early on, its passages have inspired works of art and architecture, and shaped attitudes and norms that have guided the development of Muslim artistic traditions.

In this context, would it not also be relevant to consider how, above all, it has been the Qur'anic notion of the universe as an expression of Allah's will and creation that has inspired, in diverse Muslim communities, generations of artists, scientists and philosophers? Scientific pursuits, philosophic inquiry and artistic endeavour are all seen as the response of the faithful to the recurring call of the Qur'an to ponder the creation as a way to understand Allah's benevolent majesty. As Sura al-Baqara proclaims: 'Wherever you turn, there is the face of Allah'.

Does not the Qur'an challenge the artist, as much as the mystic, to go beyond the physical - the outward - so as to seek to unveil that which lies at the centre but gives life to the periphery? Is not a great work of art, like the ecstasy of the mystic, a gesture of the spirit, a stirring of the soul that comes from the attempt to experience a glimpse of, and an intimacy with, that which is ineffable and beyond being?

The famous verse of 'light' in the Qur'an, the Ayat al-Nur, whose first line is rendered here in the mural behind me, inspires among Muslims a reflection on the sacred, the transcendent. It hints at a cosmos full of signs and symbols that evoke the perfection of Allah's creation and mercy. Many other verses of the Qur'an have similarly inspired calligraphy in all its forms, reminding us of the richness and vitality of Muslim traditions in the Arts.

It is my sincere hope that this colloquium will bring additional insights to an understanding of the Holy Qur'an as a message that encompasses the entirety of human existence and effort. It is concerned with the salvation of the soul, but commensurately also with the ethical imperatives which sustain an equitable social order. The Qur'an's is an inclusive vision of society that gives primacy to nobility of conduct. It speaks of differences of language and colour as a divine sign of mercy and a portent for people of knowledge to reflect upon.

Ours is a time when knowledge and information are expanding at an accelerating and, perhaps, unsettling pace. There exists, therefore, an unprecedented capacity for improving the human condition. And yet, ills such as abject poverty and ignorance, and the conflicts these breed, continue to afflict the world. The Qur'an addresses this challenge eloquently. The power of its message is reflected in its gracious disposition to differences of interpretation; its respect for other faiths and societies; its affirmation of the primacy of the intellect; its insistence that knowledge is worthy when it is used to serve Allah's creation; and, above all, its emphasis on our common humanity.

As this colloquium embarks on its deliberations, I wish you well in all your proceedings.

Thank you.

**Keynote Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan Concluding the Prince Claus Fund's Conference on Culture and Development,  
Amsterdam, 7th September 2002**

Your Majesty  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Directors of the Prince Claus Fund  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with gratitude and admiration that I participate in this event today. It gives me the opportunity to express publicly the enormous respect in which I hold Prince Claus, and the very great importance I attach to the work of the Prince Claus Fund. I am saddened that Prince Claus cannot be with us tonight, and I am sure that all of you will join me in requesting Her Majesty The Queen to convey to His Royal Highness our warmest regards and best wishes.

The founding purpose of the Prince Claus Fund of "expanding insight into cultures and promoting interaction between culture and development" has been fulfilled by means of a vigorous programme of grants, awards and publications. These actions recognise, stimulate and support activities that share the principles of equality, respect and trust, and have the highest levels of quality and originality. Through them, the Fund is making a very significant contribution in an area which I believe will be critical to the development of humankind in the 21st century -- the strengthening and enhancement of pluralist civil society, in all corners of the globe. The work that the Fund has accomplished has given legitimacy and stimulus to the broadest range of intellectuals, artists, and committed groups and organisations, frequently in areas of the world where the importance of such creativity is not recognised, and indeed, is often repressed. These initiatives constitute highly creative investments in the identification and premeation of forces working for the strengthening and enhancement of the pluralism of cultures that will provide strength into the future.

Within this same context the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has become a partner with Yo-Yo Ma in supporting his Silk Road Project and developing its own Central Asian Music Initiative, both of which involve some of the same performers who will delight us from this stage later this evening. This event therefore brings together three dynamic cultural institutions -- the Prince Claus Fund, the Silk Road Project, and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture -- which singly, and together, are contributing to the global recognition of the importance of cultural pluralism. It also allows me to state my conviction that the strengthening of institutions supporting pluralism is as critical for the welfare and progress of human society as are poverty alleviation and conflict prevention. In fact all three are intimately related.

The field of development has yielded more than its share of buzzwords. Phrases like, "civil society", "poverty alleviation", and "sustainable development" are familiar to many of you, as is "enabling environment" for which I must carry responsibility, since it was the Enabling Environment Conference in Nairobi sponsored by the Aga Khan Development Network, the World Bank and others which brought that phrase into common use. I hope that my remarks might release some more buzzing, because the essence of what I will say this evening refers to "enhancing pluralism".

I do not think it is necessary to spend time outlining the challenge that the process of globalisation represents vis-à-vis the cultural fabric of our world. But it is not the content of the new media, or even its domination by media giants, that is the real threat. The problem is that large segments of all societies -- in the developing world and the developed world -- are unaware of the wealth of global cultural resources, and therefore of the need to preserve the precious value of pluralism in their own and in other's societies. In this regard, there has unfortunately not been any development that parallels the recent acceptance by international public opinion of the imperative to preserve and enhance our natural environment and the world's cultural heritage as "public goods", worthy of general support.

I would go even further and say that the inability of human society to recognise pluralism as a fundamental value constitutes a real handicap for its development and a serious danger for our future. Since the end of the Cold War, a number of factors appear to have been common and significant ingredients, if not the primary cause, of many of the conflicts we have witnessed. Perhaps the most common of these ingredients has been the failure of those involved to recognise the fact that human society is essentially pluralist, and that peace and development require that we seek, by every means possible, to invest in and enhance, that pluralism. Those groups that seek to standardise, homogenise, or if you will allow me, to normalise all that and those around them must be actively resisted through countervailing activities.

Whether it be in Central Europe, the Great Lakes region in Africa, or in Afghanistan -- to cite just one example from three different continents -- one of the common denominators has been the attempt by communal groups, be they ethnic, religious, or tribal groups, to impose themselves on others. All such attempts are based on the principle of eradicating the cultural basis that provides group identity. Without cultural identity, social cohesion gradually dissolves and human groups lose their necessary point of reference to relate with each other, and with other groups.

A necessary condition for pluralism to succeed is that the general education of the populations involved must be sufficiently complete so that individual groups, defined by ethnicity, religion, language and the like, understand the potential consequences of actions that might impinge on others. This is, for example, one of the principal reasons why today there is so much uninformed speculation about conflict between the Muslim world and others. For instance, the historic root causes of conflict in the Middle East or in Kashmir are not addressed at any level of general education in the most powerful western democracies that dominate world affairs.

I must say that, as a Muslim, I stand here in front of you in amazement that the Western world had to experience the revolution in Iran to learn about Shia Islam, or the civil war in Afghanistan to learn about Wahhabi Islam. Please remember that we are talking about a religion followed by one-fifth of the world's population! This is the equivalent of Muslims being unaware of the distinction between Catholics and Protestants within Christianity. The point I wish to make is that the governments, civil societies and the peoples of this world will be unable to build strong pluralist societies with the present level of global cultural ignorance, and particularly about its pluralism. Even the most developed countries will need a massive effort to educate the world's youth in a more thoughtful, competent and complete manner for the global responsibilities which they will be expected to fulfil, and particularly so in the increasing number of functioning democracies where an informed public plays such a central role.

The actions to enhance pluralism have to be matched in the developing world by programmes to alleviate poverty because, left alone, poverty will provide a context for special interests to pursue their goals in aggressive terms. Urgent humanitarian assistance is indispensable, but should be conceived as part of a long-term strategy of helping the recipient community develop its own resources that can support the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the poorer segments of the population, and charitable support for those unable to work.

As you know, development is sustainable only if the beneficiaries become, in a gradual manner, the masters of the process. This means that initiatives cannot be contemplated exclusively in terms of economics, but rather as an integrated programme that encompasses social and cultural dimensions as well. Education and skills training, health and public services, conservation of cultural heritage, infrastructure development, urban planning and rehabilitation, rural development, water and energy management, environmental control, and even policy and legislative development are among the various aspects that must be taken into account.

To illustrate this approach, I would like to say something about the work that the Aga Khan Development Network has recently launched in Afghanistan. The scenario is dramatic: a country destroyed by decades of war, lacking basic infrastructure, economic resources,

institutional fabric, and suffering from strong antagonistic social and religious forces. The government must also facilitate the return to the country of hundreds of thousands of displaced families, feed the population, restore agricultural production, provide essential social services, eradicate drug-related crops and their ancillary industries, and last, but most essentially, consolidate a culture of tolerance, based on the mutual understanding between peoples of different origins and languages.

In this context the Aga Khan Development Network has started work in Afghanistan based on an accord signed with the Government. In the first phase, priority is being given to responding to the most pressing problems. Activities that are underway include the provision of humanitarian aid to address the food shortage in the country and the needs of hundreds of thousands of displaced people, by facilitating the resettlement of refugees, and by undertaking the rehabilitation of buildings and public works required to provide basic social services.

Simultaneously, planning is underway to help address the country's needs in terms of building human and institutional capacity for social and economic development. Steps are being taken to revive and up date institutions for the training of teachers and nurses to meet the needs of urban and rural populations. Work is underway on the reform of school curriculum in accordance with the government's guidelines and current international experience, and making basic health services accessible to all. A microfinance facility is being established to provide financing for agriculture, micro-enterprise, small business including cultural enterprises, and the special needs of refugees returning to properties that have been destroyed.

In all of this work, the cultural dimension is pivotal because of the pluralistic nature of Afghan culture, and the severe stress it has endured in the recent past. As an initial undertaking the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is working in Kabul on the rehabilitation of the historic fabric of the ancient city, its monumental buildings, and traditional housing and decayed public spaces. These projects are centred around two significant historic sites: the Mausoleum of Timur Shah, considered by many to be the founder of modern Afghanistan, and the Paradise Garden of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent. The goals range from the lofty -- the preservation and restoration of symbolic monuments of Afghan history and cultural identity, to the very practical -- immediate employment opportunities and the rebuilding of marketable skills. All of them are essential to enable the people of Afghanistan to rebuild their country in peace and dignity.

I would like to leave you with a final thought, and some questions and conclusions that flow from it. Developing support for pluralism does not occur naturally in human society. It is a concept which must be nurtured every day, in every forum -- in large and small government and private institutions; in civil society organisations working in the arts, culture, and public affairs, in the media; in the law, and in justice -- particularly in terms of social justice, such as health, social safety nets and education; and in economic justice, such as employment opportunities and access to financial services.

- Is it not high time - perhaps even past time, that a systematic effort be undertaken to document "best practices" by looking closely at the array of public policies and structures that support pluralism in particular national settings?
- As lessons are extracted and models identified, should not a process be put in place to share them widely for replication?
- Should not this effort reach out to as many countries as possible, and in as many organisational and institutional settings as can be mobilised?

In addition each of us can help enhance pluralism in our own personal, professional and institutional domains. We could play our role in favour of pluralism as public opinion makers. We could participate in and support the efforts of groups and NGOs that promote that cause. We could volunteer our professional competences in a variety of fields, such as academic, technical or managerial. We could, also, serve the cause of pluralism simply through the conduct of tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, social structures, values and faiths, and thereby set an effective example in our own society.



My hope is that society as a whole will not only accept the fact of its plurality, but, as a consequence, will undertake, as a solemn responsibility, to preserve and enhance it as one of its fundamental values, and an inescapable condition for world peace and further human development.

Thank you.

## **Remarks at the Opening of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, 2002**

**His Highness the Aga Khan  
Washington, DC, USA  
June 26, 2002**

I am here to speak briefly about Central Asia. I wanted to share with you some of the reasons why the theme of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival this year is so important.

As you know, Central Asia has been an area of considerable concern and instability for the world. Over the past decade, Central Asian countries have come into existence in difficult circumstances. Frontiers have been changed, ethnic groups have been divided, old traditions have been modified by the Soviet presence, and all this has caused considerable difficulty in looking ahead in that part of the world. The period of deep change at the national and regional levels has prompted a search for new forces of stability. One that seems particularly important, I think, to the United States and to all of us, is the validation and vigorous promotion of human and cultural pluralism.

Historically, the Silk Route was a link that interconnected diverse aspects of human society and culture from the Far East to Europe, and did so on the basis of mutual interest. This suggests that for the new countries of Central Asia, the inherent pluralism of their societies can be regarded as an asset rather than a liability. In the wider sense, it can be a means of enlarging the frontiers of global pluralism. This is a goal with which we all can and should associate.

The remarkable work of Yo-Yo Ma has enthralled audiences from all the countries of the Silk Route and beyond. By his leadership and imagination, he has proved that the force of cultural pluralism to bind people is as necessary, powerful and achievable today as was the Silk Route in history. It is my privilege and honour to be associated with the founder of the modern Silk Route, a cultural journey that inspires people to unity and joy through art.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center, Houston, June 23, 2002**

Governor Perry,  
First Lady of Texas, Anita Perry,  
Mayor Wallace,  
Leaders and representatives of the Congress of the United States, the State of Texas and the City of Houston, Consuls General,  
Distinguished Guests

It is a great pleasure to be here today to welcome one and all to the Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center at Houston. I am particularly thankful for your presence Governor Perry, and of the First Lady of Texas, and for that of many other elected officials on an occasion of great significance for the Ismaili Community of greater Houston.

Because this Center also incorporates the permanent home of the Ismaili Council of the United States and other Ismaili constitutional bodies responsible for the well being of the Community all over this country, the Center we inaugurate today is equally important for every Ismaili in the United States. We are honoured that you have taken time on a day of rest amidst your heavy schedules to share this moment of celebration, gratitude and reflection with us.

The conception and completion of a project as complex as this requires dedicated and sustained contributions from many people -- too many to recognise individually. I congratulate the design architect, The ARCOP Group of Montreal, Canada, and the General Contractor for the project, Durotech of Houston. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Aiglemont Construction Department and the Imara Volunteers.

The person who unquestionably deserves individual mention is the senior design architect, Mr. Romesh Khosla of New Delhi, India. Mr. Khosla's career has been marked by many accomplishments and awards. Among them is the design for the Mughal Sheraton Hotel in Agra, which faced the challenge of creating a contemporary structure with clear references and reflections of deep historical and cultural elements, and to do so within sight of the Taj Mahal! For his success with that assignment, Mr. Khosla was selected by an independent jury of his peers to be among the winners of the triennial Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1980, the first year of the Award's existence.

In the Center we inaugurate today, the design brief charged Mr. Khosla and his colleagues to create a contemporary building that would similarly express Islamic values, ethics and attitudes but, in this instance, in the context of Southwestern and Texas architecture and materials, and in harmony with elements of the site's natural setting and surrounding buildings.

Many of you may be surprised by the amount of time I have devoted to talking about architecture on this occasion. Those familiar with my understanding of the importance of architecture in the teachings of Islam and Islamic history will not have the same reaction. Islam does not deal in dichotomies but in all encompassing unity. Spirit and body are one, man and nature are one. What is more, man is answerable to God for what man has created. Since all that we see and do resonates on the faith, the aesthetics of the environments we build and the quality of the interactions that take place within them reverberate on our spiritual lives. As the leader of a Muslim community, and particularly one that now resides in twenty-five countries on four continents, the physical representation of Islamic values is particularly important to me. It should reflect who we are in terms of our beliefs, our cultural heritage and our relation to the needs and contexts in which we live in today's world.

Some years ago we gathered a group of eminent scholars of Islamic culture and distinguished architects and designers representing all major faiths, in a series of seminars to wrestle with the challenge of coming up with a definition of Islamic architecture. One of the first outcomes of the effort was the conclusion that no single definition exists because over its long and

distinguished history, Islamic architecture has reflected different climates, times, materials, building technologies and political philosophies.

But this is a very important finding in itself. It shows that trying to establish a norm would be counter productive, because it would stifle that strength which comes from the diversity and pluralism of Muslim societies, past and present, and the creativity of those who will build around us in the years ahead. Unfortunately there are forces at work in the Islamic world that seek to establish just such a norm. This makes it all the more important that we strive to counter such efforts by employing all the means of intellectual discourse -- research, discussion, celebration of innovative projects, and the commissioning of freshly conceived but well researched new buildings.

I think it would be appropriate for me to say something on this occasion about the Ismaili Community – in Houston, Texas, the United States and around the world. Today the Ismailis are a global community that comprises a multiplicity of peoples ranging in their origins from the north-west of the Arab world and the Middle East, through Iran and the Indian sub-continent to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Western China. Migrations in the late 19th and early in 20th centuries created a substantial presence in sub-Saharan Africa as well. As Shia Muslims, the Ismailis are united by their recognition of the Prophet Muhammad's appointment of his cousin and son-in-law Hazrat Ali as the first Imam and his declaration entrusting his Authority to his progeny through Hazrat Ali and his wife Fatima, the Prophet's daughter.

In 1957, I was still a student at Harvard when I inherited the responsibilities of the Ismaili Imamate from my Grandfather, Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah. It seemed inconceivable then that there would ever be substantial communities in the West. The Ismailis were too deeply rooted in their ancestral homes, indeed frozen there by the Cold War in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. But dislocations in the wake of decolonisation, and more recently the collapse of the Soviet Union and the prolonged difficulties in Afghanistan, have caused a number of Ismailis to seek new lands and homes. These migratory movements over the last half-century have resulted in a substantial Ismaili presence in Russia, in Western Europe, the United Kingdom and Portugal, and particularly in the United States and Canada.

In these settings Ismailis have found themselves rejoicing with new opportunities, but also confronted by new challenges. Bolstered by a long tradition of self-reliance, and a strong system of Community organisations, Ismailis have established themselves quickly as productive members of society in their new homelands. This has been particularly true in the United States with its long history of welcoming immigrants, its sense of opportunity and hope, and its recognition of accomplishment and merit. I express my gratitude to the people and leadership of the State of Texas for giving concrete expression to these important American values.

Nine eleven has scarred America, but not just America. It has scarred the Islamic world, and hundreds of millions of devout and practicing Muslims for whom the word of the Quran is the word of God. We have clarity and direction enough when the Quran affirms that to save a life is, as if, to save humankind altogether. It is in this context that I request that you view the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center, Houston, as much, much more than a place of congregation, and a home for administrative offices.

The Center will be a place of peace, humility, reflection and prayer. It will be a place of search and enlightenment, not of anger and of obscurantism. It will be a center which will seek to bond men and women of this pluralist country to replace their fragility in their narrow spheres by the strength of civilised society bound together by a common destiny. It is already a symbol of the hopes of people who lived through change and turbulence, and have ultimately found security and opportunity here in the United States, the majority of whom have chosen the State of Texas.

Thank you for sharing this important occasion with us.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Banquet Hosted in Honour of Governor Perry, Houston, June 23, 2002**

Governor Perry,  
First Lady of Texas, Anita Perry,  
Mayor Wallace,  
Leaders and representatives of the Congress of the United States, the State of Texas and the City of Houston,  
Consuls General,  
Distinguished Guests

I will begin with an apology. I request your indulgence because following a good deal of food for the stomach I am going to use this occasion to dish up a fairly heavy serving of food for thought. I do so because this is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak publicly in the United States about the events of September 11th of last year. Since then many perspectives have been articulated in many settings - diplomatic, academic, the media, and in public opinion as expressed in the streets and measured in opinion polls.

That the acts of September 11th and all that is behind them are repugnant to the very spirit of Islam and to the beliefs and yearnings of the vast majority of Muslims around the world is beyond question. In the words of the Quran it is as if the entirety of humankind had suffered a death with every life that was so brutally ended. The shared destiny of the ethos of the Abrahamic tradition that unites Christians, Jews and Muslims is governed by the duty of loving care to help nurture each life that is born to its God-given potential.

But the cacophony of voices, both in the West and the Islamic world, has generated a great deal of confusion about the broader meaning of the events of September 11th. This confusion has outcomes that are potentially dangerous for relations between countries as well as for the safety and security of individuals as they go peacefully about their daily lives.

Some years ago, Professor Samuel Huntington warned of an impending "clash of civilisations" between the West and the Islamic world as the next great confrontation following the end of the Cold War.

My position is somewhat different. It is based on my perspective as the leader of a Muslim community that now lives in the West as well as in the Islamic world, and from an engagement in international dialogue, development and cross-cultural education for more than forty years. What we are now witnessing is a clash of ignorance, an ignorance that is mutual, longstanding, and to which the West and the Islamic world have been blind for decades at their great peril.

For a number of years I have voiced my concern that the faith of a billion people is not part of the general education process in the West - ignored by school and college curricula in history, the sciences, philosophy and geography. An important goal of responsible education should be to ringfence the theologising of the image of the Muslim world by treating Muslims as it treats Christians and Jews, by going beyond a focus on theology to considering civil society, politics, and economics of particular countries and peoples at various points in their history. This will reveal the fundamental diversity and pluralism of Muslim peoples, cultures, histories, philosophies and legal systems. The Aga Khan University's newly established Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations in London will address these issues directly, as have the programmes of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture with respect to the field of architecture, and more recently music. Repositioning theology with respect to the normal forces of human society will help develop the understanding that Muslims too live in the real world and have to contend with the same issues of life - of poverty, hunger, tragedy and civil conflict as all others in the developing world.

Within the Islamic world there is work to do as well, starting with a better understanding and appreciation of the pluralism of cultures and interpretations among Muslims.

The legacy is rich, a source of strength, and needs to be encouraged and celebrated. It is also crucial that the Islamic world develops a creative and reasoned response to the impact of Western popular culture, which coupled with the dominance of modern electronic media by Western corporations, poses a serious threat to local and national identities and cultures, and their creative and sustainable evolution.

I will stop here, although there is much more to say. I warned you that my serving of food for thought would be heavy, and I hope that it has not caused indigestion. But I do feel that it is vital that we reduce the ignorance that contributes to misunderstanding and can feed conflict. The good news is that this is a process that each of us in this room can contribute to whatever our vocations or positions in life, whether through small individual initiatives or major projects. Please do join me in this important endeavour.

## **Concluding Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Winners' Seminar of The Aga Khan Award for Architecture - Aleppo, Syria, 7 November 2001**

I would wish to begin my closing remarks by first of all expressing my sincere thanks and deep feeling of gratitude on behalf of everyone connected to the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and from myself to the President of the Republic of Syria and to the Prime Minister and his Government for the most generous, thoughtful and constructive way in which they have enabled the Aga Khan Award for Architecture to hold its prize-giving ceremony and related events here in Aleppo.

I would also like to thank the Syrian Order of Architects and Urban Planners for their support. I am particularly touched by your references to my family's history in your comments.

Next in order is to express my very warm and sincere congratulations to the winners. I think that the projects we saw yesterday, and which you articulated today, all carry in their own way important messages -- and important answers to difficult questions that, with the best of competence, you have been able to construct into physical developments we can all admire. I would also like to thank the Steering Committee that stood by my side these last three years as the Award progressed from one triennium to the next and as we tried to find our way through the issues that face the physical environment of Muslim communities and countries.

I also want to thank the Technical Reviewers. I do not think it has been sufficiently stressed that the Aga Khan Award for Architecture is very fortunate to have a large team of men and women who devote their time and their knowledge to going and examining the projects that are retained for deeper analysis by the Master Jury. It is a difficult assignment and the quality of the Jury's decision-making process is, to a certain extent -- I would say to a large extent -- dependent on the quality of the detailed analysis carried out by the Technical Reviewers.

The essence of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture is to examine, analyse, understand, and try to influence the dynamic of physical change in Islamic societies. The dynamic of physical change in Islamic societies is a very wide notion. It is not limited to cities, and it is not limited to professions. Its focus is the totality of civil society, as we know it.

It is society that is changing every day around the world. Our attempt, our aspiration, our prayer is to try to have the humility, but also the competence, to understand what is happening and to seek to influence it so that future generations can live in a better environment.

In defining the physical environment in these terms, we are including the ultra poor and the ultra-rich. We are covering the full spectrum of poverty and material wealth. In my view, it would be seriously wrong to ignore either end of that spectrum. That is why architecture for the poor, building for the poor, building by the poor, is an extremely important component of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

I have been particularly pleased during this triennium to see how many projects seek to address, competently and intelligently, the different circumstances in which poor people are living.

In looking at the Award, there are two issues that come on to the table: The first is the quality of the individual projects, a topic that was discussed extensively during this seminar today. The second, equally important, is the process. What was the dynamic behind the projects? Who contributed, and how did they contribute to creating the projects that were premiated at this triennium? It is fascinating when you look at the rural projects in terms of this dynamic. They ranged from village organisations that did not exist before to one person who was concerned about the unhealthy diet in an area of Africa.

These issues of the change in the rural environment are issues of deep concern to the Islamic world because, as I said yesterday, more than 50% of the Islamic world lives in a rural environment. We cannot, therefore, afford to ignore asking: What are the processes of change in the rural environment and how we can encourage them to progress? We cannot

ignore modern life and the need for Islamic societies to improve their economies. Therefore, we cannot ignore industry, we cannot ignore tourism, and we cannot ignore high-tech infrastructure if we want to have the capacity to respond to those dimensions of physical change. Nor can we afford to ignore our history as expressed in extraordinary buildings. We have to learn and we are learning, but we cannot simply learn and not revitalise at the same time. And as we know, the process of revitalisation is very sensitive.

So I would say this evening that what we are seeking to do -- and I am referring particularly to the winners -- is to join with you as partners in making available your knowledge, your talent, your creativity, to the widest spectrum of people we can reach. We believe that in the decades ahead the process of physical change in the Islamic world will benefit from not only looking at best practices, but also thinking of excellent practices. This emphasis on excellence means making people aware of the exceptionality of quality -- not just best practice -- through your work. If we were able to make it available to decision-makers, town halls, architects, clients, and the media, we would be making your work available to the spectrum of people who actually cause change to occur in the physical environment. We look to you as our partners in this exercise.

I wanted to say that to you this evening because it is going to be your generosity of thought and time that is going to help us take -- to rural communities around the world for example -- case studies of the best that is being done to facilitate the process of positive change in rural environments, the best of what is being done in adapting the leisure industry to our societies, and the best of what is being done adapting infrastructure to our needs.

Today, we have learned some specific lessons about a large number of areas. I will touch on them very briefly.

We have learned about new ways of helping rural societies to change, how to house important activities in small but elegant and cost-conscious quality buildings. We have learned about new approaches to institutionalising the human capacity to educate and to extend its knowledge. We have learned about high quality technology that is affordable for poor environments and communities. We have learned about new materials that are being developed and used, often along with locally available materials. We learned about conservation, restoration and re-use and some of the complexities of revitalisation. We have been told that the role of the architect is not necessarily easy to define because there is some difference of opinion as to whether architects have to come out of schools of architecture or whether they can be brought out from the community with the inherited knowledge of tradition. We have heard about sensitive development in fragile ecological settings. We have also heard about open spaces and recalled that, historically, open spaces were extraordinary places of gathering and spirituality in the Islamic world. Today, they are endangered by demographic pressures that are squeezing them practically out of existence. It has required a real search to find new initiatives in developing quality open spaces in the Islamic world of today.

All of these issues have come out of this cycle of our studies. We hope to make your work and your talent available to the largest number of people, as effectively as possible. I would like to close by assuring you that we will continue on this long search to build a system whereby processes enhance the quality of change in Islamic societies.

Thank you.



**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan At the 2001 Award Presentation Ceremony of The Aga Khan Award For Architecture  
The Citadel, Aleppo, Syria, 6 November 2001**

Your Excellency Prime Minister Miro  
Honourable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

It is with great joy that I open the 2001 Presentation Ceremony of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. To do so in Syria and in this great city of Aleppo is exhilarating. For me, it is moving in a very personal way, for it takes place in a land of shared history and common heritage.

I express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Bashar Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, for making it possible for the ceremony to be held here, and for extending his patronage to it. I also thank His Excellency Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa Miro for his personal attention to the many arrangements that an occasion like this requires, and for his presence and presentation among us this evening.

I am sure you will all join me in thanking Yo-Yo Ma and the members of the Silk Road Ensemble for taking time out of their performance schedule to participate in the Award Ceremony today. Last year the Aga Khan Trust for Culture joined the Silk Road Project created by Yo-Yo Ma to support a variety of projects aimed at broadening the understanding and appreciation of the musical and artistic cultures of the Silk Road that linked the West with Asia and the Middle East -- including Syria-- for over a thousand years. This collaboration is taking many forms, one of which we have been privileged to experience today. It also includes a series of activities led by the Trust for Culture designed to stimulate interest in traditional music within and between countries in Central Asia and the Middle East. This work owes a great deal to Yo-Yo Ma's vision, creativity, boundless energy and infectious enthusiasm, and most of all to his genuine interest and respect for the creative expression of peoples embodied in the rich diversity of their cultures.

Syria has been at the crossroads of civilisations for over 2500 years -- an ancient witness to the fruitful interaction of different peoples and cultures. Today that tradition remains a cornerstone in the national psyche; an objective for all future generations of Syrians. It is also an example of which many societies around the world should take note.

Damascus and Aleppo are among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. They functioned as major seats of commerce and learning for over 1000 years and as a central stage in the critical first century of Islam. Since that time, Syria has demonstrated the power of Islam as a crucible for the spirit and the intellect, transcending boundaries of geography and culture. It has demonstrated the Muslim eagerness to learn and adapt, and to share and bequeath an enhanced understanding of man and the universe. It is also a testimony to the Quranic ideal of a vibrant humanity, rich in pluralism, and yet constituting a single human community. This heritage of respect for difference is admirably sustained in Syria today in the value it attaches to diversity, pluralism and positive and productive relationships between different segments of society.

Syria boasts numerous examples of individuals and rulers responding to another precept of the Quran: the injunction that mankind holds Allah's creation of the world in trust, with the duty to leave the physical environment better than they found it. The country is rich with illustrations of the special role that architecture plays in expressing the values and creativity of Islamic cultures. From the time of the first cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in the Shalimar Gardens in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1980, the Presentation Ceremony has always taken place in a setting of special architectural beauty and significance. I am sure that you will all agree that Aleppo continues that tradition with great distinction.

From our perspective it is also a most appropriate venue to take note of two important milestones for the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Next year, the Aga Khan Award for

Architecture will complete a quarter of a century of activities dedicated to identifying and premiating works of architecture for Muslim communities that enrich the wide variety of social and cultural contexts in which they have been built. As of next year the Trust's Historic Cities Support Programme, a product of some of the earliest findings of the Award, will also celebrate an important anniversary. At that point it will have been working for a decade on self-initiated projects to demonstrate that historic buildings and complexes of buildings in the great cities and countrysides of the Islamic world can be restored for sustainable reuse. The most dramatic example so far is a complex of projects in Cairo, involving the construction of a 30 hectare park in the centre of the historic city, the excavation and restoration of the Ayyubid wall which defines one of its boundaries and the physical and economic revitalisation of the adjoining neighbourhood which contains many important mosques and other historic buildings, but has deteriorated badly over the last century. Here in Syria, in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities and the Ministry of Culture, the Historic Cities Programme started work more than two years ago. While this beginning maybe modest, our plans are substantial and I am sure that they will grow over time. Syria has so much to offer to its own peoples and to the world.

An international seminar is being planned for early 2003 to critique in detail the work of the Award for Architecture over its first twenty-five years. But I would like to focus this evening on a few of the lessons derived from its experience over that period, because I think they are particularly relevant in the global context at this moment of history.

People interested in the Award for Architecture and why I established it in 1977, often ask me which of the buildings that have been premiated over the years are my favourites. That question, frankly speaking, misses the most important considerations that contributed to the founding of the Award. It also distracts from the understanding of its most important lessons. I say this not to take anything away from the wonderful assemblage of clients and professionals here on the stage who have been selected by the Master Jury to receive recognition for their work on winning projects this year. Each of their projects is very important, and each of them carries important messages and lessons as you will hear and see briefly this evening, and in greater detail in tomorrow's seminar. Individually and collectively, the projects that have been recognised over the years convey the meaning of the Award as interpreted by the succession of independent Master Juries.

Thirty years ago, as the eye ranged across most of the developing world, it was difficult to find new construction that reflected in its design a concern much less an understanding of the social, cultural, or in some cases, even the climatic context in which it was built. I was particularly disturbed to find this in the Islamic world, given its historical record of architectural achievement and the special place that architecture has played in the aesthetics and spiritual expression of its cultures. The gap between past accomplishment and current practice was massive. This recognition led to the establishment of the Award. And since the problems the Award addresses are global in nature and significance, it was also the basis for the practice of involving professionals from fields other than architecture and from all religious backgrounds.

The processes that define the work of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture reflect this early analysis. The Steering Committee would be composed of distinguished scholars and professionals in different fields and of diverse faiths and would deliberate afresh in each cycle of the Award to define a brief for the Master Jury and select its members. A similarly diverse Master Jury would be free to interpret the brief and refine its own definitions as it conducted its deliberations about the hundreds of projects that had been nominated anonymously by designated professionals throughout the Islamic world.

What was behind all this attention to structure and process? The goal was to create an intellectual space – something we might think of as a beautiful bustan

- in which there would be no possibility of suffocation from the dying weeds of dogma, whether professional or ideological;
- where the flowers of articulation and challenging ideas could grow without restraint;
- where the new plants of creativity and risk-taking could blossom in the full light of day;

- where beauty would be seen in the articulation of difference and for seeking diverse solutions in the form of plants of different sizes, shapes, textures and colours, presented in new configurations and arrangements;
- a bustan whose glory would stem from the value and legitimacy of the pluralism of the infinite manifestations of culture in the human community.

The immediate goal was to find the ways in which the profound humanistic tradition of Islam could inform the conception and construction of buildings and public spaces, and to do so in ways that were appropriate in scale yet inspiring in impact. At its core is a message of opportunity, of potential, of hope. The larger goal was to test a model that if successful, might be followed in some form or another to address the many issues and pressures facing Islamic countries and communities. The question today is whether individuals and groups of individuals can find the opportunity and the will to take such an approach to the problems of which we are all so acutely aware.

Culture is currently finding more space in the general media and the public consciousness than at any time in the past that I can recall. The debate is still in its infancy and has several dimensions. With respect to relations between the Western and Islamic worlds, are we not seeing a conflict of stereotypes and prejudices, exacerbated by a good measure of ignorance about Islam? There are, of course, some differences, but if superficiality and trivialisation can be set aside, and be replaced by the will to go deeper to seek a solid foundation for mutual understanding and respect, it can be found in the common heritage of the Abrahamic faiths and the ethical principles that they share.

Persistent confusion about the existence and legitimacy of different communities of interpretation within Islam is another source of misunderstanding. No one in the West sees Christianity as an undifferentiated monolith, and yet this is the commonly held perception of the peoples of Islam, while the reality is quite different. Pluralism in the practice of Islam and its expression in the cultures of Islamic civilisations have been validated by nearly 1400 years of history, including the history of its art and architecture. Indeed it is precisely this pluralism in architectural greatness that has led many authorities to consider the Islamic architectural heritage superior virtually to all others. It is essential that we respect and value that plurality; that we do all in our power to have it strengthen us in our determination, to build unity in diversity, rather than conflict within constraints.

There is a dimension of the “civilisation” debate that has not received as much attention to date, about which I would like to make a few remarks. It has less to do with interactions between world cultures; rather it requires careful thought and discussion within the Ummah, the community of Muslims around the world.

Many Muslims today, of which I am one, carry with them a memory of the historical achievements of Islamic civilisations. What is the significance of this historical memory for the Ummah in the contemporary world with its many and varied challenges? How can we look back and reinvigorate aspects of it, and what level of significance should be accorded to it? Since there is this general feeling that something has been lost, it is critical to look back in order to look forward. This is the debate that must occur, in which there must be broad participation on a basis that, like that used in the Award, provides freedom for full exchange. The goal should be to turn this great resource into an intellectual trampoline to generate ideas for building the future productively and constructively in terms that will be meaningful and beneficial for Muslims generally.

Some progress was made at an Award seminar on understanding the specifics of such a process with respect to expressions of Islam in contemporary architecture which I offer as an example, because it illustrates the level at which the process of questioning and deliberations must take place. Two lessons emerged from the discussion. One is that the technical issues of the built environment cannot be considered in isolation from the cultural and spiritual values of a society. The second is that these values have to be related at one and the same time to the historical traditions of Islam, in all their diversity, and to the fresh challenges posed by the opportunities and needs for living in the modern world.

Can these directions of search and enquiry be focussed on the critical dimensions of Islamic societies today? If we find pride in our sense of the past, but are troubled by how it relates to the present and the future, what are our ways forward? We need to achieve a better understanding of how dynamic cultures have and do lose their vitality, and to identify the potential new linkages between technical issues in relation to cultural and spiritual values on the one hand, and the historical traditions of Islam and the fresh challenges of the world in which we now live. Such discussions will be complex and will be difficult. They will be most productive if they can take place in the environment of a bustan such as the one that has proved so valuable in the experience of the Award for Architecture.

In closing, I would like to shift the focus to the clients and professionals assembled on the stage. I congratulate you for the projects that are being recognised this evening. Each of them carries important messages and lessons, and collectively they document the continuing evolution of the Award in its search for architecture that has meaning in local contexts and as examples for consideration by those responsible for building more generally. I was particularly pleased to see this year a number of projects related to the needs and aspirations of rural communities because too frequently the fact that the majority of the population in many parts of the Islamic world lives in rural environments is overlooked. I was also delighted to see two projects involving the construction of public spaces, in one case in a building within an institutional complex and in the other in the form of a public park in a major city. I thank the members of the Master Jury and the Steering Committee for the many hours of deliberation that they contributed to bringing this work to public attention and advancing the Award's thinking on critical issues

Summarising two and half decades of the Award's existence leads me to conclude that the Islamic world, by mobilizing the best of its talents in association with those from other religious backgrounds, has succeeded in reversing what thirty years ago was one of the greatest losses of Islam's cultures and civilisations, namely the quality of its physical expressions in buildings, public spaces, and gardens. Today that situation has been reversed and has been replaced with a sense of pride as the Islamic world builds for the future, knowing that its buildings and spaces are once again of world standing. Where there was once a lack of direction, there is now a clear sense of promise. The essence of this adventure may prove to be valuable as we address other issues of great importance in the Islamic world.

Thank you.

## **Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan At the Archon Award Ceremony of Sigma Theta Tau International - Copenhagen, Denmark, 7 June 2001**

Thank you very much, Dr. Thompson and Dr. Wykle, for your warm and generous words of introduction. It is an honour to have been selected as a recipient of a leadership award by such a distinguished international professional organisation working in the field of health. It is particularly meaningful to receive this recognition from Sigma Theta Tau with its record of focussed dedication to the global advancement of nursing. I have long felt the enhancement of the nursing profession to be absolutely critical to the improvement of health care in the developing world, and the Islamic world. The way forward was to professionalise, to institutionalise, and to dignify this great profession.

More than twenty-five years ago, these were some of the central concerns that led to the establishment of the Aga Khan University in Karachi and its School of Nursing. Universities have the unique capacity for forming the human resources necessary for all fields of human development. Given the state of health services in Pakistan at that time, I felt it particularly important to create an institution in the country that could offer education in the health professions at international standards. This would ensure that the teaching and research programmes would be of the highest quality, but would also be grounded in local needs and realities, and that, if properly funded and led, could make a distinctive contribution on a permanent basis. In addition, a successful national institution would have the potential to provide leadership directly and through its graduates that would be felt in the professions and also in society more generally.

The School of Nursing was the first academic programme offered by the Aga Khan University for a combination of reasons, some universal in nature, and others particular to countries like Pakistan. It is generally accepted that high quality health care, both in institutional as well as community settings, cannot be provided effectively without capable nurses to support physicians and other health professionals. But Pakistan suffers from an acute shortage of nurses. Even now, there are four physicians for every nurse whereas the international norm is at least five nurses to every physician. In addition, because women constitute an overwhelming number of nurses in the developing world, the Board of Trustees of the Aga Khan University felt that the School of Nursing could foster the enhancement of nurses, and women professionals more generally, empowering them, and increasing their standing and effectiveness in society.

Today, the AKU School of Nursing takes pride that:

- More and more women are coming forward to join the profession. By adding programmes that lead to Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Nursing for the first time in Pakistan, the School is providing opportunities for career advancement that were out of reach for nearly everyone in the profession in the country.
- The School of Nursing has become an important resource for policy dialogues with the government and the nation's Nursing Council. It has assisted in the review and reforming of nursing policies, and the curriculum for nursing education for the country as a whole.
- The School of Nursing is also in the vanguard as the Aga Khan University launches its first programmes outside Pakistan, in fulfilment of the provisions of its charter as an international university. The School is developing an initiative in Advanced Nursing Studies regionally in Eastern Africa, responding to the needs for advanced training in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya.

I am particularly proud that the School of Nursing is in a position to reach out to assist professionals in other developing countries. International linkages have played a critical role in the development of many of the programmes at the Aga Khan University. In the case of the School of Nursing the most important relationship has been with McMaster University and the Canadian International Development Agency. I am certain that such linkages will continue to be important as the University matures and is in a position to increase its contributions to such relationships, in addition to being the beneficiary of them.

In this regard I believe that the establishment of the School of Nursing's Rho Delta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International will provide the significant and much needed impetus for strengthening the research capability and scholarly activities of the nurses at AKU and the countries it serves. The Board of Trustees, the leadership of the University and the School of Nursing, and I look forward to a very positive and productive association for all concerned. We thank you for helping us to professionalise, institutionalise, and dignify nursing in Asia and Africa.

Thank you.

## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan**

**Centenary Celebration Meeting, Association of American Universities - Washington, 22nd April 2001**

### **Making a Difference: Reflections on Shared Problems, Shared Opportunities and Shared Responsibilities in International Higher Education**

Thank you President Vest for your very generous words of introduction and thank you all for the very warm welcome. It is an honour to be invited to address such a distinguished assemblage of educators. If IQ could be converted into kilowatts, I have no doubt that the quantum massed here tonight would meet the world's energy requirements for at least a decade.

In 1954 I came to the United States for the first time in my life and entered Harvard College as a first year student. It was an experience that I will never forget. All of my formal education up to that point had been in French, and although I had studied English, my command of the language was not up to the demands of Harvard's curriculum. Fortunately there were several of us in the same position and we worked together to find French editions of as many of the assigned readings as possible. We wrote our papers in French, translated them into English, and waited in fear for our grades.

By a quirk of nature, although I was born right-handed, I had the good fortune to come into this world left-footed. Soccer players who could kick with their left foot were very rare in the United States in those days. This meant that I was able to make the Freshman Soccer team as the left wing. We were a distinguished group; we turned in an undefeated season, and also had the distinction of all being on a list in the Dean's office, not to be confused with the Dean's list, although we were never troubled to explain that fine distinction very fully to our parents. To this day I am convinced that I owe my Harvard degree to my left foot.

I can tell you that I had many a sleepless night during that first year at Harvard, and when sleep came, it was often accompanied by a dream (nightmare might be more accurate). In it I was hauled up in front of a senior authority figure, thoroughly scolded about my performance, told that I was unfit to be a member of the Harvard community of scholars, and then sent back to my room to pack my bag to return home. Not knowing anything about the structure of educational institutions other than my boarding school in Switzerland, I always imagined that authority figure to be the head of the institution, or in the case of Harvard, its President. Memories of the fear I felt at having to face only one university president then, gave me little comfort as I prepared to face a room full of you here tonight.

As I turned my thoughts to what I might say on this occasion, that old fear took on a new form. How could I presume to have something to present on the subject of higher education that was worthy of the scholarship, experience and responsibilities in higher education represented in this room? I am not trained as an academic, published as a scholar, or experienced as an educational administrator. While I am not sure that my comments will fulfil the programme committee's expectations, I have decided to draw on my experience working in social and economic development in parts of Asia and Africa over the last forty years.

A number of the issues about which I will speak are touched upon in the Task Force on Higher Education convened two years ago by The World Bank and UNESCO which was co-chaired by Professor Henry Rosovsky who spoke to us so effectively this afternoon. I will illustrate and expand on them by drawing on the experience of the agencies that comprise the Aga Khan Development Network as they have worked in areas with high concentrations of the world's poor; in Central and South Asia, and in Sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose is not to "toot our own horn", but to focus on specific problems and opportunities and offer examples and lessons that can be drawn from our experience working in circumstances that are often very difficult due to the collapse of economies, political instability, and civil strife. I also hope to be able convince institutions in both the developing and the industrialised world to come together to work on some areas of common problems, opportunities and responsibilities.

For those not familiar with our work, I would note that while the Aga Khan Development Network's activities are rooted in the worldwide Shia Ismaili Muslim Community, its programmes and activities in each setting are open to all without regard to ethnicity, race, gender or religion. As a matter of policy, none of the Network's educational institutions offer instruction in religion unless required by the national curriculum.

Quality education at all levels is, and has been, critically important for all societies at all times. In the developing world education offers the poor -- opportunities for new futures, women -- higher status, and new roles in their families and communities, migrants -- an asset that is portable, and refugees -- an asset that is both portable and secure. For these reasons, the Aga Khan Education Service has for many years operated several hundred schools in Eastern Africa and Central and South Asia -many in isolated settings, with a particular interest in the education of girls. I say this because the rest of my remarks this evening will focus on higher education, and I do not want to be understood, even by implication, as believing that primary and secondary school is of lesser significance. It is critical to the existence of an informed citizenry everywhere. Quality school level education is particularly important in the developing world where only a small percentage of the population will ever be able to attend a university, and where population growth is massively more rapid than the expansion of capacity of its universities. Finally the school system has a vital role to play in preparing those who do go on for further studies to make full use of that opportunity. It is the supply system for higher education and therefore cannot be neglected.

But higher education has a special importance because of the difference it can make by developing new models and standards for other institutions in society, and by inculcating in its students the skills of critical thinking, analysis and problem solving, under-pinned by a strong grasp of moral reasoning, ethics and respect for others. While our world may be changing at a rate unprecedented in human history, it is not all positive. Negative changes are numerous; disrupting societies as evidenced by the violence that we see in so many parts of the world today. Positive change that is permanent requires strong institutions at all levels of society, and institutional development requires models, and capable and enlightened leadership. The report of the Task Force on Higher Education makes a number of important observations and recommendations in its review of higher education in the developing world. Among the most important from my perspective are those that relate to higher education as a public good, and the re-evaluation of the public returns on investment in higher education. These findings support the Task Force's recommendation for greater investment in higher education in the developing world by governments, international development organisations and private initiatives.

The questions most commonly asked when people learn that I am founding a new university are: "How many students will it have" and "when will the construction of buildings begin"? From my perspective the questions should be:

- "Given all the current problems in that country, and all the existing universities, why start another university?"
- "What will it teach?",
- "What are your expectations for the impact that the institution and graduates will have?", and finally,
- "How secure is its funding over time?"

I believe that institutions of higher education have greater prospects for success for their students and for the societies they serve when they focus on four factors: quality, relevance, impact and resources. The decision to create the Aga Khan University (or AKU as we refer to it) as the first private university in Pakistan, more than twenty years ago, was taken in the context of the deteriorating quality of higher education in the developing world. As a private university, AKU would have to remain small, but to justify the investment required it would have to become a role model for a country of more than 120 million people. To assume and retain this status AKU had to be a quality institution not only in terms of its academic offerings, but also in terms of admission and financial aid policies, governance, management and its



financial health. The attraction of Board members of international standing in fields of education and development played a critical role in this quest.

Academic excellence was achieved through careful selection of faculty and the nurturing of partnerships with important institutions in the West, many of which are represented in this room -- Harvard, Johns Hopkins, McMaster, Toronto, Oxford, but also in Asia with the National University of Singapore.

But quality is not enough to justify the support of donors, society and the authorities in a developing country; a university's offerings must also be relevant. Following a study carried out with the assistance of Harvard, AKU's Board decided to focus its initial efforts on addressing the very poor quality of social services in Pakistan and much of the developing world. Today, the Faculty of Health Sciences, including Nursing, and the Institute for Educational Development, are all having an impact beyond the training of students at high levels in their respective fields. They have given new status and recognition to women professionals who constitute an overwhelming majority of teachers and nurses in the region. The Medical College's Health Sciences Department has developed a pioneering model for treating the community as a patient rather than only the individuals who present themselves for care. A fifth of medical students' curriculum time is spent in the Community Health Sciences. Nursing students also take part in this activity, and obtain their learning experiences in the rural areas of the country.

The quality and impact of the University can be further gauged from the fact that over the last fifteen years Pakistan's professional licensing body has recommended that all medical colleges in Pakistan adopt AKU's model of community based medical education. Similarly, the Pakistan Nursing Council has adopted AKU's nursing curriculum. Research has also concentrated on those themes that are relevant and have outcomes that impact society. With respect to the University's Institute for Educational Development, more than half of all course participants come from government institutions. Here the Institute's impact is not only visible in the improvements in classrooms and management of government schools, but also in government's major policy-making fora in which the Institute is invited to participate on a regular basis.

This is the kind of role that a small private university with strong international connections can play if it focuses on quality, relevance and impact and seeks opportunities to share its experience and human resources with other institutions and society as a whole. Examples, models and well-trained graduates can contribute to the improved performance of the vast number of schools, universities, health clinics and hospitals that exist in countries like Pakistan but often are functioning at levels far below their potential, and those necessary to meet the country's needs.

I would now like to shift to another area of great importance for higher education in the developing world. Here I refer to the rapid advances in communications and information technology of the last ten to fifteen years that have opened up the prospect of dramatically expanding international linkages and the reach of educational programmes in both spatial and temporal terms. This topic is on the agenda for tomorrow, and most appropriately so for an international gathering of educational leaders like this. It is true that the implications of the impact of communications and information technologies on the role, structure and functioning of the university, as we have known it are only beginning to emerge. But their development is important for universities everywhere in the world, even though applications may vary for some time to come.

The ability to project programmes and activities over great distances can bring educational opportunities and resources into settings where they are poorly developed at present, because of financial constraints, or sheer isolation. Where individuals have access to computers in their homes or, as will be the case in rural areas in developing countries for some time to come, in community centres, technology can provide the first real opportunity for lifelong education on a broad scale. One lesson is clear. The mastery of the use of the essential elements of communication and information technologies will have to be part of the experience of every university student sooner rather than later. The use of the technology

should have a place in the educational process itself, and its mastery should be on the list of competencies that every graduate should possess.

But this is only the first step. Even in the United States, the founder and leader in the development and application of information and communication technologies, the realisation of their potential for education is still at a very early stage. A few weeks ago Lawrence Grossman, former president of NBC News and the Public Broadcasting Service, and Newton Minow, former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and PBS made this point in their op-ed piece entitled "The U.S. Should Invest in a Digital Library" that appeared in the International Herald Tribune. They introduce the recommendation in the article's title by observing that " . . . the Internet and digital communication are being largely wasted in America as a resource for the kind of broad education the future demands," that " . . . entertainment of marginal quality dominates commercial attempts on the Internet to reach a mass audience," while at the same time "the treasures in U.S. libraries, schools and museums are locked away for want of money to make them available to the full American audience."

I have quoted this article at some length not to advocate Grossman's and Minow's solution -- although I think it makes great sense for the United States and would also be a priceless gift to the rest of the world and the cause of world peace. I do so because it so clearly and authoritatively makes the case for concrete and imaginative steps that may lead to a fuller utilisation of the Internet for educational purposes. It is not a question of a single cosmic solution, but rather a wide range of initiatives. The Internet was created at an international research institute in Switzerland as a means to make data and finding readily available without cost to scientists around the world. Institutions of higher education have a responsibility to participate in the process of developing and shaping the use of the Internet for educational purposes in their societies and around the world.

At a seminar entitled "Architectural Education Today" held in Switzerland two weeks ago, William Mitchell, Dean of the School of Planning and Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an authority on the use of the Internet for a wide range of purposes, offered a succinct summary of some of the advantages and disadvantages of the use of the Internet for remote education. He stated that the debate that focuses on conventional versus remote education is wrongly formulated. The issues are their relative advantages and disadvantages -- including effectiveness and cost -- and their complementary use.

Remote education is disadvantaged because it does not offer the value-added that comes with proximity to the instructor and the cross fertilisation with other students in the classroom or studio. Because users need facilities and training to draw on it and shape it to their needs, it carries high overheads, particularly at the outset. On the positive side, remote education has the advantages of scale. It dramatically increases the reach to scattered rural communities, which still represent the vast majority of the developing world's population, it adds the possibility of bringing imported expertise into remote and isolated contexts, it creates opportunities for cross-cultural experiences, and it makes possible the broad collaboration of specialists in scattered locations. Dean Mitchell contends that such efforts can reap the benefits of what he calls "educationally mediated globalisation," which respects and incorporates intellectual diversity and cultural pluralism.

Examples are more meaningful than these generalisations. I will offer two rather different case studies of efforts by agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network to make more effective use of the Internet for educational purposes.

The first is a project to develop a World Wide Web based resource to enrich the information available for architectural students, teachers, scholars and professionals interested in architecture in the Islamic world. It builds on twenty-five years of cultural research, education and revitalisation by the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT, and the programmes of what is now the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva.

These initiatives were launched following a series of consultations with architectural scholars and professionals of all faiths and from different parts of the world who were brought together

to address a black hole in Islamic societies with respect to one of the most important dimensions of their identity and heritage - their built environment. At that time there was a real vacuum; there was little scholarship, no centres for study and professional training, and no collections of visual and textual resources on one of history's greatest traditions of architecture. The dominant perspective was that improvements in the quality of life demanded the adoption of the symbolism and style of countries and societies that were considered "advanced". Twenty-five years later a complete turn-around has been achieved. Not only have patrons and professionals come to understand and embrace this important form of cultural expression, the inventories of buildings found in different countries have revealed and legitimated a diversity of expression of which even the Islamic world itself was unaware.

The emergence of the World Wide Web as a vehicle allows these efforts in public and professional education of the last twenty-five years to take on an entirely new scale. The project, called ArchNet, is being developed at MIT and is scheduled for launch in September. It will bring together and make available the visual and textual information amassed in collections in Cambridge and Geneva. Though microscopic in comparison, it is an example of just the kind of digitalisation of inaccessible material for which Grossman and Minow are arguing.

But the example does not stop here. It is not enough to simply "dump" information into communities around the world, even if, as in this case, they are communities of trained professionals. As an integral part of the ArchNet project, space on the Website has been provided for users to exhibit their own work, to communicate with other ArchNet members, and participate in informal discussions of topics of their choice that are relevant to the overall purpose of the project, and to participate in organised discussions, including collaborative design studios. Equally important, schools and departments of architecture with interests in the Islamic world can establish sections on the Website to present their programmes, activities, and collections of visual and textual materials. In ArchNet's development phase institutions from Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan were invited to help establish this dimension of the Website. Once it is officially open, other institutions may join as well. A special effort will be made to bring in schools of architecture in Central Asia and Sub Saharan Africa.

My second example relates to the new University of Central Asia. Last summer I signed an international treaty for the foundation of the university on behalf of the Ismaili Imam with the Presidents of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The University is dedicated to addressing the problems of poverty, underdevelopment and environmental degradation in the vast and largely forgotten mountain zone of Inner Asia. By doing so, I believe it will make a significant contribution to the establishment of peace and stability in the region by addressing some of the most important problems that currently plague it: poverty, isolation, and a deep sense of hopelessness.

The University of Central Asia will provide training and research on the problems and prospects of the mountainous areas of Central Asia and the twenty to thirty million people who inhabit them. The new institution, which will begin by offering continuing education courses this year, will be private, secular, will recruit students and faculty on the basis of merit, and will be open equally to men and women. Its main campus will be based in south-eastern Tajikistan, in the town of Khorog on the Panj River, which serves as the international boundary between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Satellite campuses will be opened in mountain settings in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and in other countries in the region who decide to join the university in the years ahead.

Given the university's locations and mission, it has no option but to make an aggressive use of the latest developments in information and communications technologies. This is particularly true for its degree programmes, which will start with a masters degree in integrated mountain studies in three years, and a bachelors degree soon thereafter. These programmes will be taught in English, and will draw heavily on databases and human resources specialised in mountain studies, to supplement the locally recruited and specially trained instructional staff. While most of you may not know it, there is a small, dedicated, but widely scattered group of specialists around the world committed to the study of mountains

and mountain populations - self identified as the "mountain mafia." Their experience and knowledge will provide the kind of remote resource that can be imported, and their interaction with students and faculty, during summer visits, and throughout the year on a remote basis will lay the foundation for the kind of "mediated cross cultural dialogue" that Dean Mitchell envisions.

There is one last topic about which I would like to say a few words. Building capacity for moral reasoning and moral judgement is a goal that appears in the foundation documents of many of the world's oldest and most prestigious universities. For a number of reasons, I worry that insufficient attention is being paid to the development of these important capabilities and that the situation may worsen in the years ahead.

The advances that have occurred in the sciences-most recently in the biological sciences, and the engineering that underlies computer and information technologies - are important for economic development and attractive to students and scholars. I applaud these developments, but worry that they will crowd out parts of the curriculum devoted to the study of the great humanistic traditions that have evolved in all civilisations throughout human history. Exposure to these traditions contributes to the formation of values, as well as an understanding of the richness and diversity of human experience. The complexities of world problems and societies today require people educated in broad humanistic traditions in addition to the guidance and direction provided by the teaching of their religion. The history of the twentieth century is replete with examples of the danger of the systematic propagation and uncritical acceptance of dogmas, ideologies, and even theologies. More than ever, I believe that universities must shoulder the responsibility for contributing to the process of building the capacity for moral judgement in complex settings. This is another area where the leading universities of the world can individually and collectively respond to a shared opportunity and a shared responsibility.

I will close by returning briefly to some basic themes. Higher education in the developing world operates under enormous pressures for which there are no simple solutions. Private institutions can make a contribution through experimentation, and where successful, as models. Linkages between institutions are critical to this process, particularly international linkages.

The identification of new sources of finance for higher education has to be a high priority. National governments in the developing world are hard-pressed to meet existing education budgets, not to mention the additional funding required for expansion to accommodate growing populations, deal with a backlog of problems, and introduce new programmes. International agencies, public and private, will help, but only within limits. The identification of private sector funding is essential, as is the creation of an environment of regulations and benefits that encourages private companies to support institutions of higher education.

It has been said that the Internet is the most important development for education since the invention of the printing press. But for now it is grossly underused for educational purposes. Universities around the world should take on the task of developing educational materials, resources and programmes for the Internet. They should add their voices to critics of regulations and policies that impinge on the use of the World Wide Web for educational purposes in favour of commercial interests.

Let us remember the historic role of "The University" in the study, interpretation and transmission of the great humanistic traditions of the world. Our search for global peace in an inter-connected, and crowded world, with rising expectations, needs to understand and internalise their many lessons more than at any time in the past.

Thank you

**Remarks Prepared by His Highness The Aga Khan For The White House  
Conference on Culture and Diplomacy  
Washington D.C., 28 November 2000**

Thank you Mr. President. It is an honour to be associated with this distinguished panel in a discussion of a topic which I have long felt has received too little attention, particularly at the policy level. Thank you for the invitation.

I offer my comments this morning from the perspective of someone who has been a long-standing observer of cultural evolution in the developing world of Africa and Asia, and from more than twenty-years of experience with activities such as the Aga Khan Award for Architecture that have attempted to make a positive contribution to that process.

At present there is a great deal of apprehension about the future of local and national cultures in most countries in the developing world. What can the cultural diplomacy of the United States do to address these anxieties and replace them with a sense of confidence through new and shared initiatives?

If the cultures and value systems of the developing world are being challenged -- or are believed to be under threat - I think it valuable to try to identify the nature of the challenges. For the sake of discussion, I would put the major issues under the headings of language, institutions, people, communications, and funding.

First, there is the issue of language. During the process of de-colonisation in Asia and Africa, the driving objective of the governments of the newly independent countries was to create nation states. A national language was seen as an important part of this process. Forty years later, the world's dominant foreign language, English, is viewed as a necessity in most areas - but not yet as an opportunity. For cultures in the developing world to be globally accessible, understood, respected and admired, and to be represented in electronic communications, they must ensure that their cultures find expression not only in the national language, but also in English.

The second issue is institutions. In most parts of the developing world institutions and places of particular importance to cultural inspiration and expression are all too often abandoned or neglected by both governments and civil society. Museums, conservatories, and buildings and public spaces in historic cities are generally in a precarious state. This is also true of higher education, particularly in the arts and the humanities. In their present state these institutions cannot contribute to the survival and reinvigoration of inherited value systems, and may actually contribute to their further degradation.

The third issue is people. Culture is by its nature rooted in people. Unfortunately, in the countries of Asia and Africa which I know, cultural expression as a life-long vocation nearly always leads to a dead-end. Artists in the industrialised world at least have the possibility of mobilising the resources necessary to live with dignity. The economic environment for cultural professionals in the industrialised world does not exist in the developing world. Indeed it is being weakened further by the collapse of traditional value systems and the cultural production they supported.

The fourth issue is communications. Cultures that do not or cannot communicate become increasingly isolated, inward-looking, and, in due course, marginalised. Some would argue the United States' dominance of global communications systems is, because of what has been called the digital divide, a contributor to this problem. I would offer a different perspective. It seems to me that by a purposeful effort, the United States could play a significant role not only in making the cultures of Asia and Africa available globally. Doing so would also make a massive contribution to the full acceptance to the legitimacy and value of social and cultural pluralism, something that is urgently needed in most parts of the developing world.

The last issue is funding. The reality in the countries of Asia and Africa is that the material resources required to sustain cultural activities are either not available because of higher

priorities, or because there are no incentives to support culture. But with their economies becoming increasingly liberalised, an increasing percentage of national wealth being will be created by private initiative. It is my dream that private individuals and organisations will come to the support of culture, as has been the case for centuries in the industrialised world. For this to happen, many new methods of giving will need to be stimulated and developed through appropriate public policies.

In response to the challenges facing countries in Africa and Asia that I have outlined, the United States, with a wealth of educational, private philanthropic institutions and global corporations that is unparalleled in human history, can play a leadership role. Specifics can be discussed later this morning or in this afternoon's sessions. Much very important work devoted to the issues of language, institutions, people, communications and funding is already underway, but there is scope, and I would say a need, for a massive expansion.

It is my hope that this meeting will lead to a re-conceptualisation of the role in culture in public life and international policy and move more public and private institutions to initiate or expand their activities devoted to the support of culture. I can assure you that you will find interested and reliable partners in the parts of the world with which I am familiar to join you in this process.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
The Aga Khan University Convocation  
Karachi, Pakistan, 21 October 2000**

I would like to add my welcome to all of you, the family and friends of the Aga Khan University! It is an honour and a particular pleasure to have His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf here with us today.

Convocations are occasions for summing up, for stock taking, for congratulations, for celebration and for looking forward. They are a time for individuals, for families, for the components that make up a university and for the institution itself. As Chancellor I would like to speak to all of the audience, and to the future, as well as the present.

First I would like to speak to the students who are graduating today. I am sure that many of you feel that this is "your day". This is understandable and justifiable - it is your day. Obtaining entrance to the Aga Khan University was a very significant measure of your merit and potential. The successful completion of your academic programmes is a second such measure, as represented by the degree or diploma that will be presented to you by the University. I offer congratulations to you personally and on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

In addition I would like to leave two thoughts with you. First, I anticipate that the professional qualification you receive today will not be the last one that a number of you, many I hope, will receive in the course of your careers. Education in this fast changing world has become a life-long affair. It is not too early to set new goals, to develop your vision. Second, this institution lives and grows on generosity. I urge you to be the very best ambassadors of that generosity towards society, throughout and in all dimensions of your lives.

Let us turn now to another very important factor in the success of the young people that we celebrate today - their families, their relatives and their friends. It takes a great deal for a student to succeed in a rigorous academic programme. Support from loved ones in many forms -- support to meet the costs and other material needs of an education, support in adjusting to new surroundings and new demands, support at times of stress, and sharing at times of celebration, are all critically important. My congratulations and thanks to you all.

I would like to take this occasion to speak about the many new developments in which AKU is engaged, in the city of Karachi, in Pakistan, and around the world as it moves to fulfil its mission as established in its Charter. Watching institutions evolve over time is very interesting. At first glance they seem to grow in fits and starts, with no major developments in some years, and then a rush of new activities, programmes, and accomplishments in a short space of time. This impression is valid in some measure. No institution has the time and resources to be in a constant mode of innovation and creation, even if the broader environment in which it operates is highly favourable. But in another sense it is misleading because major new developments take years for study and planning, for securing the required funding to ensure that no new undertaking draws resources away from existing ones, and for the recruitment of new personnel and the construction of facilities. As the amount of time required for these essential steps varies, and some things move faster than others, it is often difficult to spread them out evenly over time. As I believe that you will soon appreciate, the last twelve to eighteen months have been one of those bursts of activity for the Aga Khan University.

A noteworthy achievement is the ISO 9002 Certification of the entire Aga Khan University Hospital, the first teaching hospital in Pakistan and one of the few in the world to receive this distinction. The Hospital was successfully audited for certification by an international team from AID-Vincotte in Belgium in June of this year. My congratulations for an important job, very well done.

Yesterday three new buildings were inaugurated that bring much needed facilities to the campus, the Juma Building which contains a Biological Safety Level 3 Laboratory, the first of its kind in Pakistan, and the Ibn Ridwan Building. The new AKU Sports and Rehabilitation Centre contains facilities that will have an important impact on the quality of life for everyone

in AKU and in the wider community. The Rehabilitation facilities are a very important addition to the Hospital's other facilities for patient care. The foundation stone for the new Nazerali-Walji building was also laid yesterday. It is the first phase of new ambulatory care services at AKU in response to the increasing number of outpatients and gives them greater access to various medical services. Those at AKU responsible for supervising their construction deserve our thanks.

Universities are by their very nature, loss making operations. This is particularly the case for institutions involved in research. This therefore an appropriate moment to say something about the critical importance of donors to the development of this remarkable institution.

Earlier this week, in Islamabad, I participated in a conference on Indigenous Philanthropy in Pakistan, which was graced by their Excellencies President Rafiq Tarar, and General Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The meeting had several goals. One was to present findings of original research on current levels of giving and volunteering in this country, which showed much higher levels than many would have thought. Another was to recommend steps that could be taken to increase philanthropic activity and its application to institutions engaged in human resource and social development as well as to traditional charitable and religious activities.

AKU was cited as one of the models of effective development of philanthropic resources and their use in Pakistan. Indeed as we gather here today, it is impossible not to be impressed with what the power of giving and volunteering can accomplish. I extend my sincere thanks to the donors who have made the new facilities possible. Looking more broadly at its fundraising, I would also observe that the University is now clearly a national institution whose spectrum of philanthropic support has steadily increased in breadth. We are grateful to all donors of funds, professional services and time who make this institution what it is today, and what it dreams to be tomorrow.

In addition to the development of these fine new facilities, steps are underway towards the establishment of a major new dimension of AKU that will extend its expression as a university. In keeping with the recommendations of the Chancellor's Commission, the University has launched a feasibility study for the establishment of a College of Arts and Sciences in Karachi. In its initial phase, the new College will start at the undergraduate level and then progress to postgraduate studies. The undergraduate programme will follow the "liberal arts" model, and aims to develop the skills of critical thinking and analysis, a high order of proficiency in verbal and written communication, and the mastery of a particular academic discipline. An emphasis on ethics, especially of Muslim societies, and on community service, will infuse all of its programmes. The latest information and communication technologies will support the educational programme, and their mastery will be one of its required outcomes.

A senior member of the Board of Trustees, who has agreed to assume a leadership position, will be joined by a group of national and international experts to do a careful study of existing institutions and needs in Pakistan, and in the developing world, with special reference to the Ummah. The survey will form the basis for development of a specific plan for a College of Arts and Sciences that meets those needs in the most imaginative and effective manner. This process will take time, since the study group's recommendations will lay the foundation that will need to be pursued diligently and consistently, over an extended period, to ensure the long-term internal integrity of the institution and its external results.

I am pleased to announce that the Government of Sindh and the Aga Khan University have agreed on the purchased on an 400-acre site for the College of Arts and Sciences on concessional terms. The new campus will be located at Deh Chohar on the link road between Super Highway opposite Sindh Madrassa. I am grateful for this concrete sign of support from the Government. As a reflection of the importance I attach to the development of this new expression of the Aga Khan University, I would like to announce a donation of \$ 20 million to launch its funding.

Another recent development relates to AKU's mission to reach out from its base in Karachi and become directly engaged in addressing problems at the local and regional levels. When



the Aga Khan University was first conceived, the Harvard University-led feasibility study recommended that AKU should begin its service to its constituencies by being a problem-oriented university. It should focus on the critical national demands for the delivery of social services to the country's population, and especially to the most isolated and impoverished communities of Pakistan. Over the years, it has become evident that to impact health and education services in remote settings or in the katchi abadis in cities effectively, another type of institution is needed to form a bridge between them and the University.

Two days ago I had the pleasure of inaugurating a new Professional Development Centre in Gilgit designed to improve the quality of primary and secondary schools in the Northern Areas. The idea of establishing it originated in the realisation that students from schools there performed well below national averages year after year. This was true even for the better students from the better schools in the region, meaning that it was virtually impossible for students to secure places in the country's leading universities and professional schools on the basis of merit. To break this cycle, the only solution was to find a way to upgrade the quality of the schools across the region.

The Centre will bring the programmes and experience of AKU's Institute of Educational Development to the Northern Areas, to provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their effectiveness, and enable communities to look to their schools to attain higher standards of student achievement, and better use of scarce resources. It will serve all schools in its catchment area; government schools as well as those operated by non-government organisations. Trainees at the Professional Development Centre will be taught by members of IED's faculty and will receive certificates from the AKU-IED. AKU- IED's involvement with the Centre is a critical form of outreach and also furthers its efforts to contribute to the development of women professionals. I have made a commitment to develop a hospital in Gilgit that will perform a similar bridging function between the Faculty of Health Sciences, the University Hospital and rural health centres with the assistance of the Aga Khan Health Services. I am convinced that this new pattern will magnify the impact of the resources of AKU throughout important regions of the country.

I would like to add a few additional comments about the two new initiatives outside of Pakistan mentioned by Rector Vellani. The Advanced Nursing Programme, developed in response to the invitation of three governments in East Africa - Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda - is the University's first academic programme abroad. It is significant that it is an example of South-South, technical assistance, with a Pakistani institution providing assistance to other developing countries. I congratulate the School of Nursing for the progress that has been achieved on this new venture. I also salute the School for successfully completing twenty years of service to improving the delivery of health care and the development of women professionals in Pakistan. The Institute of Islamic Civilisations in London will give expression to our University's Islamic character, in an international context. Its programmes are quite distinctive. IIC will create an index of published works on Islamic civilisations in various languages, write abstracts and translate them into the major scholarly languages, and distribute the abstracts globally on the World Wide Web. This unique facility, which would enable many experts around the world to access each other's work for the first time.

The second activity involves the engagement of scholars and thinkers in thematic research on issues that affect contemporary societies that have escaped systematic attention in Muslim environments. Participants trained in both traditional and contemporary intellectual traditions, would take part in a given project through periods of residence at IIC and over the Internet, and results will be made available on the World Wide Web.

An education programme on Islamic civilisations would be the third area of activity. It would develop materials and curricula for the various units of AKU, other institutions in the Aga Khan Development Network, and a broad range of institutions from schools to higher education, in Muslim and other societies. IIC would also organise short courses and seminars around themes, or for specialised groups such as diplomats, journalists, and businessmen. A more formal post graduate program designed to engender a critical humanistic approach to the study of Islamic civilisations will follow.

Reflecting on this long list of new and impending developments yields several conclusions. The first is that AKU has become a genuinely national institution. It is engaged in addressing national needs by developing high quality human resources in the fields of health and education, engaging in problem oriented research, working with government on policy issues, and reaching out to become directly involved in upgrading the delivery of critical social services at the local and regional levels. The second is that, with the decision to establish the College of Arts and Sciences, AKU will take the major step of moving beyond professional education toward becoming a comprehensive university in its classical form. The third is that the establishment of the Advanced Nursing Programme in East Africa, and of the Institute of Islamic Civilisations in London, give life to the University as a Pakistani institution with an international mandate, reaching out as an expression of Pakistan into the international community.

The question before this institution at this moment in time is to ensure that it can maintain quality and integrity as it takes on many new activities. What are the specific parameters which should concern us? We cannot take the time this afternoon to formulate all of them, but I would suggest a few as a basis for further consideration:

- The quality of the university's graduates and their contributions towards improving social services in Pakistan.
- The institution's performance in reaching isolated and impoverished communities with quality professional services.
- The fulfilment of the School of Nursing's special role to produce graduates who are sophisticated women professionals making a direct impact in their field, but also acting as role models for women in Pakistani society more generally.
- A research programme that is beginning to push the boundaries of knowledge, particularly with respect to human development needs in Pakistan and the developing world.
- The University ensures three important attributes, or goals, are in constant view as it reviews existing programmes and adds new ones: quality, relevance and impact.

I would like to take a few more minutes to inform the Aga Khan University community of one other new initiative of great significance to the work of the Aga Khan Development Network and to me. It is not another programme or division of AKU - let me be very clear about that; it is the addition of a younger sibling to the family of Aga Khan institutions, and like any younger brother or sister, it will need the help of its elders.

In late August I travelled to Central Asia to sign an International Treaty between the Presidents of Tajikistan, Kyrgyz tan, and Kazakhstan and the Ismaili Imamat, to create a new institution of higher education. The University of Central Asia will be dedicated to developing teaching and research programmes focussed on the problems and potentials of the thirty million people, and the mountains in which they live at the convergence of the highest mountain ranges in the world. The legal formulation of the University of Central Asia is unique. It is the first to be created as a single organisation under international law, signed at the highest level of government, and encompassing a number of states in a particular region. Its main campus will be located in Khorog on the Panj River, in Tajikistan, with programmes and facilities in the mountainous regions of Kyrgyz tan, and Kazakhstan.

- The Undergraduate Division will offer courses of study in engineering sciences, the natural sciences, the social sciences, and cultural studies, but all students will be required to take courses across the curriculum, and courses in market economics, field research methods, and institutions of civil societies.
- The Graduate Division will offer an interdisciplinary degree in mountain studies. Over time, concentrations in particular fields such as environmental management, cultural protection and enhancement, and tourism will be developed.
- The Continuing Education Division will offer a variety of independent, non-degree courses in general education, skills, and retooling for mid-career professionals in government, non-government organisations, and the private sector, and special topics of particular interest making full use of the methods of distance education.

Faculty and staff and students will be openly recruited throughout the region, and selected on the basis of merit. Special programmes will be provided to enable faculty and students to acquire expertise in English and the use of communication and information technologies.

This University will be a new, freestanding institution within the Aga Khan Development Network. While it will not be part of the Aga Khan University, it will certainly look to AKU for its experience and expertise on a wide range of policies and practical matters. Indeed many at AKU have been deeply involved in the study, planning and negotiating to bring the University of Central Asia to its current stage of development. President Kassim-Lakha served as the Co-Chair of the Organisation Commission that undertook the feasibility study, and many of his colleagues contributed to the work of its committees. Here is an example of Pakistan's first private university, playing a leadership role in creating a new university in a region of enduring interest to this country, and thereby, establishing a timeless opportunity for intellectual, academic and other interchanges between Pakistan and the countries of Central Asia.

I have taken a great deal of time to outline the many endeavours in which the Aga Khan University will be engaged in the coming years. Progress on them will be dependent on the context and conditions in Pakistan. It is a source of confidence and hope that His Excellency General Musharraf is here today, as the direction he will give to Pakistan's social and economic development and international relations will have a significant impact on all Pakistani institutions. This is particularly the case for universities given their responsibility to educate the nation's future intelligentsia and leadership and project the country to the outside world through its work.

May Allah bless us all in this endeavour.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan**  
**Plenary Session: Conference on Indigenous Philanthropy**  
**Islamabad, Pakistan, 17 October 2000**

Let me begin by adding my welcome and congratulations to all the participants in this path-breaking meeting. His Excellency Rafiq Tarar, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, honoured this gathering with his presence and presentation yesterday. General Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has honoured us by participating today and we look forward to his comments later in the programme. Their willingness to join these proceedings and thereby lend their support to its deliberations underscores, in the strongest of terms, the importance and potential of indigenous philanthropy in Pakistan at this moment in history. I thank them both for fitting the conference into their busy schedules, for their valuable suggestions, and for their vital encouragement.

I would also like to commend everyone who has worked to make this conference a success. The breadth of support it has enjoyed from government officials and institutions and from individuals and organisations representing all segments of society is, itself, a singular achievement. Indeed, I would venture to suggest that the organisation and conduct of the conference may be a model for new venues to grapple with many of the challenges confronting positive social and economic change in Pakistan today. Partnerships that bring together the government, the private sector and civil society institutions have great potential. I am impressed by how the Steering Committee, with its diverse composition in terms of backgrounds and perspectives, has been able to reach a clear consensus on such a complex set of issues, in such a short period of time.

I would also like to recognise the donors who have made this conference possible. The Canadian International Development Agency merits special mention in this regard for its long-standing support for the development of civil society institutions in Pakistan, and for the work of the Aga Khan Development Network more generally.

The creative leadership of the Steering Committee, the original and very interesting research papers, and other conference documents, the deliberations of the working groups, and the presentations at the plenary sessions have, in combination, laid a basis for formulating plans for the immediate future. I would add my endorsement to the recommendation to establish the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy as a means to institutionalise some of the processes that have been put in motion by this conference. I am sure that the work of the proposed Centre would move philanthropy in Pakistan to new levels of giving, new forms of activity, and new heights of accomplishment.

I am convinced that the potential for future development of this movement is enormous because it builds on the strongest of foundations. Philanthropy and charitable giving hold a very central place in the teachings of the Holy Quran, the writings of Islamic thinkers, and the history of Muslims in all parts and cultures of the Islamic World, including here on the sub-continent. Islam's clear and explicit injunction is to share resources beyond one's reasonable commitments, and to care for those in need. I will not speak further about them this morning as they received attention in yesterday's presentations. There are, however, some specific aspects of the teachings of our faith that are worthy of additional comment. They deal with the ethical basis for important policy decisions relevant for the future of philanthropy in Pakistan, and the duty to insure the integrity of philanthropic organisations.

Religion and generosity - the gifts of time, of funds, and of material - have been closely linked throughout human history. Religious institutions, buildings, and activities have been a major focus of giving in virtually all religious traditions and in countries at all stages of development. Charitable support for the poor and for the victims of disasters has an equally long and widespread history. In the Islamic World, from the earliest days, wealthy donors evolved a special form - endowments (Awqaf) - to address charitable needs on a sustainable basis. Philanthropic funding for social development (as distinguished from charity) is a somewhat more recent phenomenon. Support for schools and hospitals, often through endowments, were its first forms. The funding of institutions engaged in human resource development came later but is beginning to grow rapidly.

The Quran, the Hadith, the sayings of Hazrat Ali, and many scholarly sources make numerous references to the forms and purposes of philanthropy. Human dignity - restoring it, and sustaining it - is a central theme. Enabling individuals to recover and maintain their dignity as befitting their status as Allah's greatest creation, is one of the main reasons for charitable action. There is dignity in the individual's ability to manage his or her destiny. That being the case, the best of charity, in Islamic terms, can go beyond material support alone. It can take the form of human or professional support such as the provision of education for those otherwise unable to obtain it, or of the sharing of knowledge to help marginalized individuals build different and better futures for themselves. Thus conceived, charity is not limited to a one-time material gift, but can be seen as a continuum of support in a time frame which can extend to years. This means that multi-year support for institutions that enable individuals to achieve dignity by becoming self-sustainable, holds a special place amongst the many forms of charity in the eyes of Islam.

There is another precept found in the Quran and Islamic philosophical texts of great significance that is particularly relevant in this context. It is the emphasis on the responsibilities placed upon those charged with the management of philanthropic gifts and the institutions supported by them. The duty of responsible stewardship is very clear, a concept that can be equated to the notions of trust and trusteeship in today's international legal terminology. The obligation to maintain the highest level of integrity in the management of donated resources, and of the institutions benefiting from them, is grounded in our faith. It is critical to the realisation of the purposes of all gifts, to the continuation and growth of philanthropic giving, and for credibility in the eyes of the public. Muslim societies have the moral right to expect and demand that philanthropic donations be managed according to the highest ethical standards.

The teachings of Islam and the history of Islamic civilisations give us direction and courage to take on the challenges and responsibilities of active engagement in philanthropic work. The world in which we live today provides additional stimulus to do so as well. Self-reliance at the national, and local, levels is a theme that is now receiving greater emphasis than at any time in the last fifty years. This is a significant departure from development thinking in the 20th century, with its emphasis on state and international organisations as "nannies" to which citizens could look for everything. It also represents a move away from "special" relations between individual countries in the developing and developed world, with their overtones of dependency and patron-client relationships. My sense is that in Pakistan today, the urgency of reducing dependency on external resources is widely appreciated. It will be equally important for the general public to understand and appreciate the requirements and consequences of the shift in responsibility for social services from the government to private and community organisations as well.

As governments pass more and more development responsibility to private and community level initiatives, countries must improve existing social service and development institutions, and create many new ones. Building and strengthening institutions and sustaining them on a continuing basis will depend primarily on the availability of philanthropic resources. The provision of such resources through multi-year grants is the optimum form of support. It enables institutions to plan and develop in an orderly fashion, rather than existing from year to year.

The question before this conference is how the movement toward self-reliance can be effectively supported and encouraged at the national, community and individual levels. The establishment of a Centre for Philanthropy, as recommended by the conference, would be a concrete step in that direction. Another would be to look for ways to strengthen an "enabling environment" of beneficial tax and regulatory conditions to stimulate philanthropic giving. Creating fuller public understanding of the role of philanthropy in the support and development of activities formerly offered exclusively through government funding are also very important.

My own engagement in international development work now extends over a period of more than forty years. This experience, which has included establishing the agencies of the Aga

Khan Development Network to mobilise domestic and international support for a wide range of projects and activities, has yielded some important lessons.

The first is that funding is generally forthcoming when the conditions are right: solid institutions with committed leadership that inspire trust and confidence, an enabling legal and regulatory environment that welcomes and encourages philanthropic action, and programmes and activities that are grounded in local needs and initiatives and are informed by the latest thinking and experience wherever it can be found.

The second lesson is that giving can take many forms - funds, time, ideas, and professional skills. Everyone can and should be a donor, not just the wealthy, and all forms of giving should be encouraged and recognised. Volunteerism is critical, and is obtaining greater and greater recognition and encouragement. One indication is that the United Nations has designated the year 2001 as the International Year of the Volunteer.

The third lesson is that new forms or objects of giving do not take place at the expense of more traditional forms, and should not be seen as competing with them. More funding for institutions engaged in social and human development does not, if experience elsewhere is a guide, mean less giving for traditional forms of charity or for religious institutions. An invigorated culture of giving, supported by appropriate institutions and an enabling environment, benefits all institutions supported by philanthropic giving.

Experience around the world, in developed and developing countries, suggests that partnerships involving the government, the business sector, and the wide variety of institutions of civil society, have enormous potential for finding innovative solutions to the delivery of social services, and the development of a nation's human resources.

New institutions will emerge, and existing institutions can be improved and in some instances take on new areas of activity. Opportunities will develop to create capacity to look beyond the pressing concerns of the day, and to address problems that are chronic or emergent.

Let us dream a little about some of the beneficiaries of a vigorous and maturing philanthropic movement ten or fifteen years from now. Endowed professorships, providing resources to attract and retain Pakistan's very best talent in critical fields of teaching and research, could be a feature of major government universities, not just a small number of private institutions. Funds for medical research on health problems and needs that are particular to Pakistan's different regions and that can never be fully resolved by depending on the international research system, could be made available on a competitive basis to researchers in public and private universities, and in the commercial sector. Sustaining cultural integrity is a major issue in many parts of the non-western world today. How can these cultures survive in the face of the globalisation of communications, and the huge resources of the western media giants?

Cultural institutions could be funded to develop material on all facets of Pakistani culture designed for use in the new media and directed to both domestic and international audiences.

These are only a few examples of what might be considered in the future. I am sure that this audience could think of many more. I also suspect that all of you know at least one or two very good institutions in this country that do very important work, and yet are extremely fragile for want of better financial support. They too would be appropriate beneficiaries of a maturing philanthropic system.

It is also important to recognise that needs will change because conditions themselves will certainly change. The experience of the Aga Khan Development Network in the Northern Areas is that the social service and development needs today are very different than they were fifteen years ago. Philanthropic institutions have the opportunity, and I would say the responsibility, to be observers of trends and to anticipate emergent needs. They can support activities that focus on the kind of longer term requirements of the nation that are difficult for the government to consider, given the breadth and an depth of its role in dealing with the pressure of all its everyday responsibilities.

But now let us return to the present. Given what this conference has been able to accomplish, I am very encouraged about the future of indigenous philanthropy in Pakistan. The movement has a firm foundation on which to build. Giving in all forms is already much higher than many would have imagined. Fostering the expansion and development of philanthropic action will require continuous and vigorous attention. It is a source of confidence and inspiration that the ethical premises for philanthropy, from the time of the Revelation and throughout Islamic history, legitimise the application of charitable giving that has been the subject of this conference. I trust that some years ahead we will be able to look back at this gathering as something of great significance in the development of self-reliance and sustainability for this nation and all of its peoples.

You and I will recognise in General Musharraf's presence the importance he attaches to the subject of this conference, and his willingness to move its agenda forward. I thank him for sharing his time with us, and look forward to hearing his comments with great anticipation.

Thank you.

**Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan  
The World Bank InfoDev Conference  
Washington, 10 November 1999**

Thank you, Jim, for your kind words of introduction and for inviting me to address this gathering. It is an honour to have this opportunity to speak to an audience that is so distinguished and so accomplished.

The rapid developments in information and communication technology are of immense importance for those of us engaged in promoting positive economic, social, and cultural change. Like Jim Wolfensohn, I believe that they are also critical because development in all those dimensions is a prerequisite for world peace.

My remarks this afternoon are directed to the challenge of developing the human resources required for broad-based, sustainable development in some of the poorest parts of the world. It is my hope that these specific examples will provide a bridge between the complex and important issues involved in creating global information infrastructure and assuring broad access to it, and its application to specific, non-commercial development efforts, particularly those that are non-commercial in character. I will do this by reporting on three projects at various stages of development being undertaken by agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network.

But first, I would offer two general observations:

Several sessions have considered the gaps within and between developed and developing countries, and how they may be exacerbated because not all countries and cultures are presently positioned to reap the benefits of new technology. The importance of access was the subject of an entire session this morning. At this point access is the biggest constraint facing the networked economy. I would hope that continued attention to addressing this bottleneck will be one outcome of these meetings. I also hope those efforts will go beyond conventional programmes of development assistance, and will reflect at least a measure of the ingenuity that has driven the development and applications of this remarkable technology in the last few years.

But it is also important to ask if access is enough-- even the probably impossible dream of universal access. Will it not be equally important to develop capacity in the developing world to enable institutions and individuals to be more than users -- even interactive users -- of the new information technology? We all know that software and some hardware is already being produced in some of these countries. On the basis of my experience in culture and development over the last 30 years, I believe that it is critical to build capacity more generally to position users to be active participants in the advances in the shaping of content and applications. Only then will the full potential of the new information technology begin to be realised. And only then will the concern of some, that the Internet poses a threat to their cultures, be addressed.

My first case study involves culture and development, a field in which I have had an interest of long standing. I should take this opportunity to say publicly how important I think it is that the World Bank has embraced culture as an important dimension of development under Jim Wolfensohn's leadership. For too long, culture was dismissed as either irrelevant, or elitist, or was seen as an obstacle by development specialists.

Since 1957, when my Grandfather appointed me to succeed him as the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network have been involved in building schools, hospitals, housing estates, and other constructions in the Islamic world. Early in that process, it became clear that while the use of the buildings was usually adequately defined, they had less and less to do with the architectural traditions of the societies that they were to serve. As we expanded our questioning, it became starkly apparent that across almost the entire Muslim world the traditions of architecture, one of its greatest and most distinctive forms of cultural expression, had become irrelevant or had disappeared.



Once the issue had been framed, some of the greatest architects in the world together with men and women from all disciplines and all religious backgrounds -- Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist -- joined me, to create programmes to help address the crisis in the built environment of the world's one billion Muslims and those among whom they live. The aim was to widen - for people of all backgrounds -- the sources of knowledge and inspiration for the design languages of Islamic cultures.

Now, two decades later, the best buildings and spaces of the Islamic world are exceptional once again. Designed and used by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, they address some of the most intractable problems of our age: rapid urbanisation, the "slumification" of the rural built environment, management of historic structures and public spaces, and shelter for the very poor. For me, this is a powerful example of what can be achieved in as little as 20 years when talented and committed individuals can come together and focus their attention. In this instance, they did nothing less than begin the process of reversing the hundreds of years of decay that contributed to the erosion of the physical dimensions of cultural identity in Muslim societies.

Programmatically this has been accomplished through initiatives. The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, using an independent jury, selects innovative projects of all types - new constructions, restored buildings, and public spaces to share a \$500,000 prize every three years. The results are fully documented and vigorously publicised as examples to stimulate creative thinking about subsequent building projects around the world. The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology is dedicated to research and the training of scholars and practitioners to enrich building in the Islamic world by expanding the pool of knowledgeable professionals and the resources for their work.

Recent developments in information and communication technology, and the rich array of talent at MIT now make it possible to bring the resources developed through these initiatives to students, teachers, scholars, and practitioners throughout the Islamic world. A project team at MIT's School of Architecture and Planning is establishing an on-line community of professionals interested in Islamic architecture. It is being developed in close cooperation with the Graduate School of Design and the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Harvard, and with the support of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva. Called ArchNet, it is an ambitious Internet-based network that is intended to serve students, teachers, scholars, and design and planning professionals. Its goal is to provide an extensive, high-quality, globally accessible intellectual resource focused on topics of architecture, urban design, urban development, and related issues such as restoration, conservation, housing, landscape design, and construction in seismic sensitive zones with special reference to the Islamic world. It will be achieved by providing historical and contemporary images and drawings, an extensive bibliography on the art and architecture of the Islamic world, G.I.S. and CAD databases, and a searchable text library. MIT Press, a leader in electronic publishing, will maintain the Website on an accessible server.

ArchNet's structure is being designed to offer each user with a personal workspace tailored to his or her individual needs. From this space, the user will be able to contribute his or her own findings and research to the larger site. The Website will aim to foster close ties between institutions and between users. Through the use of on-line fora, chat rooms, and debates, it is hoped that the site can promote and enrich discussions among participants by providing effective support for research, teaching, and practice in architecture, and related fields for the benefit of all who live within the Islamic world, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It will be a bottom-up system, in which information will eventually flow directly from the user to a continually expanding resource base that can be shared by all. The lessons learned will be accessible globally, and of interest to those who are addressing similar problems of the built environment in other parts of the world.

Another feature of the project's design involves the selection of partner schools of architecture on a regional basis around the Muslim world, to participate directly and actively in shaping this initiative. Each partner institution will be provided, as needed, with the hardware, software,

training, and infrastructure support necessary for active participation in ArchNet. The partner institutions will not only benefit by assured access to the contents of the Website, they will contribute to the expanding base of knowledge and information on it, and will also be invited to shape its scope and direction. Each school will coordinate with the other departments of architecture and planning in their respective regions to gather resources for which they have a particular expertise.

I believe that ArchNet will demonstrate the enormous potential of the global information system for supporting communication and collaboration among architectural and planning students, faculty, scholars, and practitioners throughout the world. It is particularly important that this can occur across countries in regions that share cultures, economic circumstances, and climatic and geographic characteristics. I anticipate that once ArchNet is up and running, it may prove to be an important model for other subjects and professional groups.

My second case is a new programme designed to develop human resources for the improvement of health services in East Africa. It is being undertaken by the School of Nursing of the Aga Khan University in Karachi. AKU is Pakistan's first, private, autonomous university and its charter, promulgated by the Government of Pakistan, allows it to operate academic programmes anywhere in the world.

The Trustees of the University decided that the provision of health care in Pakistan had been insufficient for so long, both in terms of quality and coverage, that one of the earliest contributions the University could make was to found a Faculty of Health Sciences. A Medical School and a teaching hospital were central to the programme. But because Pakistan has one of the lowest ratios in the world of nurses to doctors, AKU decided that the first component of its Faculty of Health Sciences had to be a School Nursing. This was created in 1980 with substantial support from McMaster University in Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency.

The programmes carried out by AKU's School of Nursing over the last two decades have clearly demonstrated that a focus on nursing advancement enhances the status of women by making them indispensable partners in societal advancement. Nursing, primarily a women's profession in Pakistan, empowers women and improves their status in their communities. It provides positive role models for other women, strengthens their decision-making and problem-solving capabilities in the eyes of others, and promotes their personal, professional, and financial autonomy. When AKU began operations in Pakistan, nursing was a very low status profession, and nursing studies were a neglected discipline in health education.

Since its founding, the School of Nursing has graduated almost 1100 diploma students and nearly 200 Baccalaureate graduates, and has launched a post-graduate Masters Degree programme. It has become a leading resource for nursing education, not only in Pakistan, but also for other developing countries. It is on this basis that the Ministries of Health in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have invited the School of Nursing to launch its regional programme for upgrading nursing education in Eastern Africa.

The health status of the populations of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, is among the poorest in the world. Twice as many women in Kenya and Tanzania die in childbirth as the average for low-income countries, and more than four times the average die in Uganda. In addition to facing the traditional causes of high rates of morbidity, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania bear the heavy and tragic burden of HIV and AIDS.

In the face of these challenges East African governments have adopted programmes to restructure the health sector to make services more effective, accessible, and affordable. The strategies call on governments to focus on financing and providing primary and essential health care packages at the community level, rehabilitating and better equipping provincial and district-level health facilities, and introducing cost-effective delivery of care at tertiary facilities.

Only recently has it become apparent that effective reform requires a significant investment in the personnel responsible for managing health services and providing care. While some

programmes have been implemented to improve the capacities of those charged with managing the reformed health system, little systematic attention has been given to enhancing the clinical and managerial competence of nurses at all levels of the system. Nurses in service are a logical focus for a new programme because they are less expensive to train, are widely present in rural areas, and are usually the first point of contact for a patient seeking care. They are also essential to the competent provision of hospital based tertiary care.

At the outset, instructional programmes will employ conventional distance education technologies. Distance education is particularly suited to the initiative because it is cost efficient, allows participants to remain on the job while they improve their skills, and because it makes professional advancement available to women who generally cannot leave to pursue studies elsewhere. As the programme matures, and infrastructure develops, computer based information technologies will be employed to link the East African centres to resources at the School of Nursing in Karachi, and to provide enriched access for nursing professionals in more isolated parts of the region. If successful, the Advanced Nursing Studies programme should serve as a model of effective educational cooperation between two parts of the developing world.

My third and last case study is, in some senses, the most ambitious of all. It involves the creation of a new university, located in Central Asia in south-eastern Tajikistan, near the convergence of some of the highest mountain ranges in the world - the Pamirs, the Hindu Kush and the Karakorum -- and the border with north-eastern Afghanistan. The mission of the university is to develop research and educational programmes focussed on the mountain regions and peoples of Central Asia, and mountain regions more generally. The Commission that was charged with analysing the need for such an institution and developing a conceptual plan has completed its work, and steps are underway to develop the agreements and understandings with the governments of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic to establish it as a truly international university.

The location and nature of the proposed university is such that it cannot succeed without an aggressive use of computer based information technologies. The university would have three units:

The first would be an undergraduate, residential, liberal arts programme with a special focus on the technical and managerial subjects required for development of mountain regions and peoples. These would include forestry, high mountain agriculture, engineering and natural resource management, and business, economics, and public administration. There would also be special attention given to the cultures of high mountain communities.

The second would be an interdisciplinary masters degree for development specialists in the government, non-government, and commercial sectors.

English, now recognised as an international language by the governments of the region, would be the medium of instruction for both degree programmes to ensure that graduates are able to participate in global systems of all sorts.

The third division will offer non-degree programmes for people in isolated settings, and for mid career professionals in Central Asia. It will be offered in Russian and regional languages.

To accomplish this ambitious set of goals, the university will require a sophisticated learning resources centre that will constitute the technological core of the institution, and which is critical to overcoming the physical isolation of its campus. Together with the use of English as a medium of instruction, it will constitute one of the university's most distinctive features and should play an important part in attracting prospective students, faculty, and donor support.

This is a very ambitious undertaking. It calls for a substantial initial investment in Internet access, a fibre optic-wired campus, and computing equipment, as well as regular investments thereafter to keep abreast of new developments. It calls for a faculty whose members are not only computer literate but, more importantly, prepared to change their methods of teaching and conducting research to take advantage of innovations in the rapidly changing field of

communications. It calls for a rector and deans who arrive on the job with experience in and openness to, the new learning technologies. It calls for the inclusion of technology training into the preparation (and eventually recruitment) of incoming students.

It will also require the establishment of satellite learning centres in mountain communities across the region and certainly in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic and other countries from which the university will draw students. For the master's programme, it means opening distance learning links with leading institutions and scholars elsewhere who might develop special courseware for students on the home campus.

Why is a distance education initiative included in what otherwise is a residential research and teaching institution?

First, because there are thousands of persons who were trained to fill posts in the Soviet system whose skills must be updated if they are to survive professionally in the post-Soviet era. These include teachers, civil servants, and those responsible for nearly every sector of the economy. Graduates of the new university will themselves require in-service training and professional updating over the years. The kind of life-long learning this entails is rare or non-existent in Central Asia. The proposed division could provide it in such a way as to become a model for other institutions in the region.

Second, a market economy and civil society call for many new skills. Unless those beyond university age are simply to be abandoned, they too must have an opportunity to acquire such skills.

And third, millions of non-university graduates, formerly employed in Soviet enterprises, must now acquire trades or professions that will enable them to exist independently.

Outside the former Soviet territories, a different set of circumstances creates similar needs. In Xinjiang, Western China, many of these skills exist, but are concentrated in the large urban centres. Many traditional trades and crafts survive in Pakistan's Northern Areas but they need to be updated and supplemented with the skills which modern economies require. Afghanistan, by contrast, has seen the loss of most of its traditional capacities without the introduction of more modern skills. As a consequence, millions of people there have no means of sustaining themselves and the society as a whole lacks many of the trades that are essential for the merest survival. The scale of demand in Afghanistan is likely to be enormous and beyond the capacity of any one institution to meet. But, an effective Continuing Education programme operating at one or more satellite campuses there can serve as a model for others.

Here then are the three major projects that the Aga Khan Development Network is presently advancing that rely in different ways and to different degrees on information and communications technology.

The ArchNet Website will directly address the vitality and understanding of architecture in the Islamic world and its contribution to the quality of life, subjects that are central to the identity of a billion people and their cultures.

The Aga Khan University's School of Nursing's Advanced Nursing Programme in East Africa will build on twenty years experience to address the needs of a health system struggling to meet long existing challenges of health maintenance in a tropical region, and the more recent scourge of HIV and AIDS. By focussing on nurses, it will reach all the way from primary to tertiary health providers, and also contribute to the improved status of women in those societies just as it has in Pakistan.

The Central Asian University at Khorog, will be the first teaching and research institution exclusively focussed on the needs and potentials of the 20 million people living marginal existences in poor isolated mountain communities. The aggressive use of information and communication technology will allow undergraduate and graduate students from the countries of Central Asia to have access to a world of knowledge and information without leaving the

settings that are familiar, and which they will study and apply the results of their education. The same technology will enable the University to provide training in subjects to participants spread across the region, with a specific emphasis on skills needed for meeting the challenges of functioning in post Soviet societies and economies.

Each of these ventures is experimental and challenging. Each addresses the critical problem of human capital, as well as a specific development objective. We have a clear vision of what we hope to achieve and why, but we realise we will need help to bring it to fruition.

Thank you.

## **Speech at The Foundation Stone Ceremony of The Lisbon Ismaili Centre**

**His Highness the Aga Khan**  
**December 18, 1996 Lisbon, Portugal**

Your Excellency Mr President of the Republic, Your Excellency the Representative of the President of the Parliament, Your Excellency the Representative of His Excellency the Prime Minister, Your Worship the Mayor of the City of Lisbon, distinguished guests,

We are all, Mr President, deeply honoured by your presence here today at an occasion that is significant, as it is historic for Ismaili Muslims worldwide and for myself. Today's ceremony has a very special meaning for us, because it marks much more than the foundation of a place of gathering for the community. Dedicated to the preservation of spiritual values, the promotion of social development and the enhancement of intellectual discovery, the Centro Ismaili, will seek to contribute to the enjoyment by citizens of Lisbon, and visitors alike, of spaces and buildings whose inspiration will aim to empathise, as well as expand our cultural horizons.

The space that the Centre will create in the midst of this historic city will, I hope, serve as a bridge linking and enriching various cultures of Europe with others of Africa and Asia, as it draws upon associations both from within and outside the Portuguese-speaking world. In so doing, the Centro Ismaili will, thus, follow the long tradition of Portuguese seafarers, who set off from this very port of Lisbon to those, then improbably distant lands, and who eventually succeeded in shortening distances between continents and peoples.

I speak on behalf of all Ismailis, and on my own behalf, when I say how deeply grateful we are to Portugal and its people, and to you, Mr. President, as well as to the generous donors who made this site available and the launch of this project possible. We express our gratitude not only for your help with the project, but for the open and cooperative way in which this country has always assisted the Ismaili Community in its endeavours, promoted its progress, and reinforced and facilitated the realisation of its hopes and aspirations. Few nations have shown so much integrity and sincerity in making transplanted populations feel at home at the very time when they left their homes behind. We thank Portugal for her help, both concrete and moral, for the way in which the Ismaili community, which came, for the most part, from Mozambique, but also from other parts of Portuguese-speaking Africa, has been caringly and open-mindedly welcomed. It is our hope that through the quality and design of the buildings to be built here, through their programs to better this great city for everyone, will stand a tangible and lasting symbol of our friendship and commitment.

The Ismaili Centre in Lisbon will bring to Portugal's capital city new buildings and open landscaped spaces which aspire to be unique in quality and design, which will hopefully carry with them also a certain prestige. The city of Lisbon is a metropolis comprised of Portugal's Government, numerous communities, public and private institutions - all of which have many international links. And of course, Lisbon has long been a world centre of culture, and an integral part of human history. Lisbon is also the epicentre of PALOPS, and a link to the many Portuguese-speaking nations around the globe. We hope that the Ismaili Centre, and its activities and programmes developed here by various components of the Aga Khan Development Network, will succeed in presenting the Ismaili Community of Portugal and the world community, as a community and an interpretation of Islam which are intellectually strong and humanistic in outlook. We hope that this initiative will reflect a community living in Portugal which, through its Centre and activities, will share its strong social conscience with the widest spectrum of people and faiths in Lisbon and further abroad.

Although Ismailis have lived in the West since the late 1950's, only two other Ismaili Centres of this importance and magnitude have been built in the Occident to reach these goals. Through lectures, presentations, conferences, recitals, and exhibits of art and architecture, alone, or joined by other national or international entities in the cultural field, these Centres have become ambassadorial buildings which today reflect and illustrate much of what the Shia Ismaili Community represents in terms of its attitude towards the Muslim faith, its

organisation, its discipline, its social conscience, the effectiveness of its community organisations and, more generally, its attitude toward modern life and the society in which it exists. This Centre in Lisbon, like its predecessors in the West, will strive to be not only a place of gathering for prayer, but a space for articulation of thought and positive impact on the wider community.

If it is successful in achieving these goals after its opening, it will have a significant influence on a large number of Portuguese opinion-makers in various walks of life, who will, through one initiative or another of the Centre, positively recognise both the Centre itself and the Ismaili Community. And it is for these reasons, that this site and the buildings that will come up on it, will be the fruit of contributions not only of the Ismailis of Portugal, but also of many other countries.

But if this new Centre in Lisbon may have some aspects which are common to its two Western predecessors and may perhaps even take advantage of their experience in its operation, it differs from them significantly, for the site on which we stand today is much larger than those. This Ismaili Centre will be comprised of a small complex of buildings, and a large area of open, well-landscaped, public space which will bring to a western capital city some of the unique design traditions found in so many famous and outstanding outdoor places in the Muslim world. Having said this, Lisbon, Portugal, and Portuguese culture are already intimately familiar with Muslim culture, and have been for a millennium. We see the mark of Islamic tradition in many realms of Portuguese culture: In its architecture, in its language, in its music, so that this Centre should never seem alien or out-of-place in Lisbon. It will be public in the sense that members of the community will use the site to walk in, and converse in, and enjoy, and when it is being used by the non-Ismaili community of Lisbon, they will also be invited to enjoy the site. In other words, the Ismaili Centre in Lisbon will be able to envisage activities which could not be accommodated at either of the other Ismaili Centres in the West.

Finally, on this important day of building for harmony and humanism, it is appropriate to remind ourselves that this Ismaili Centre will house the headquarters of the Aga Khan Foundation Portugal, and so, beyond enhancing understanding and promoting pluralism, it will also be poised to accomplish some very important and concrete results. The Aga Khan Foundation Portugal will seek out collaborators based in Portugal for programmes here and development abroad. Many competent Non-Governmental Organisations operate out of Portugal, working to improve the quality of life in the Third World. And in these endeavours, the Aga Khan Development Network can be an effective and useful partner, having its own considerable experience in Third World development, and many ties to countries within the Third World. I would like to cite the example of Mozambique as a nation which is Portuguese speaking, part of PALOPS, and in which the Aga Khan Development Network will surely operate in the future.

Any collaboration between Portugal and the Aga Khan Foundation for the development and improvement of poorer nations will be facilitated by the Ismaili Centre, which will soon stand where we have gathered today. It will thus be a useful partner to Portugal in the very concrete task of improving conditions outside the frontiers of Portugal and of Europe.

It is my deep hope that this will be a Centre of goodwill, and of learning, of experience to be shared open-handedly, a place uplifting in the beauty of its design, a place for Portuguese Ismailis, of course, to meet and practice their faith, and we hope, a lasting token of our commitment to a long and fruitful relationship with Portugal.

## **Baccalaureate Address at Brown University**

**His Highness the Aga Khan  
May 26, 1996 Providence, Rhode Island, USA**

President Gregorian, faculty members, postgraduates and graduating students, ladies and gentlemen,

President Gregorian, thank you for your very generous words. It is a great honour for me to be at this Commencement Ceremony as Brown represents much of what is best in Western liberal education. Let me also congratulate the graduating students for whom the memory of this day, I am sure, will remain with them throughout their lives.

One of the things most often said to university students on their graduation day is that they must now prepare to face the "real world". You should be glad to hear that I am not going to tell you that but as someone who has been living and working in the real world for a very long time, I can tell you this: the world is now a different place.

It is different from what it was forty years ago, five years ago, different even from last month's world. It is different because we are witnessing a massive acceleration in the rate of global change. Today's world is a living environment in which you will have to adapt much faster than your parents did, in order to have a positive and constructive impact on the future. Having said this, the means at your disposal to achieve such an impact have multiplied exponentially during the last decade. Never before has there been so much knowledge available about so many different people; never before have we known more about the physical world in which we live; never before therefore have the opportunities been greater to make a better life for more people around the globe.

For the last fifty years, our planet has been frozen by a paralysing bipolar political vortex which we call the Cold War. During those years, many allowed their views to stagnate and harden into notions so dependable that they became unrevisable dogmas: My capitalism versus your communism, your eastern bloc versus our western bloc and left versus right. But like the Berlin Wall, our old bipolar system was dismantled almost overnight, and with it the black and white world to which we had grown accustomed. Unfortunately, views and thought habits, although intangible, are less easily broken than bricks and politics. Learned human behaviour dies hard.

The world has become a hurtling place in which change occurs constantly, and in which we need to learn again, to evolve. Free now, from an artificial tug-o-war in which most were only expected to identify with the rope, we are facing a world of doubt and questioning, and universal uncertainty, the new hallmark of our time. Growing from our thawing earth today, is the unsure and uncomfortable process of discovering and learning about mobility and change. In all societies, disconcerting but pertinent questions are being asked: Who will lead in the process of change? What beliefs should guide us? Will they be scientific statements and data, or philosophical visions? What constraints or opportunities will shape our future? What are the priorities that we must address first, and why should they be priorities? That these questions are answered correctly should be a source of concern to us all. Because if the responses do not come principally from those of us fortunate enough to have been educated, fortunate enough to have food and medicine and shelter, who can make progress in providing these things to the less fortunate, the responses will come from the contestations of the excluded. In short the responses should come from you.

In this new and challenging environment, the people and nations which were paralysed by someone else's struggle for supremacy are free now to hope. Despite global acceleration, America still benefits from the intellectual liberty and hope for the future on which this nation was founded. But these elements, too easily taken for granted by those who are used to them, are of primordial concern in many other societies. In Algeria, Bosnia, Rwanda, Tajikistan, people are fighting and dying because their lives can finally be changed. Those nations that used to be part of the Third World, have become an obscure "south" and "east"



that in emerging from obscurity are increasingly present. Indeed, the world you are about to enter is a fluid one in which you will have to be flexible.

President Gregorian tells me that I am the first Muslim ever to give the Baccalaureate address at a Brown Commencement in the school's illustrious 232-year history. This makes the occasion a very special honour for me. It also carries the considerable, even intimidating responsibility to speak about the place of Islam and of Muslims in the world today, about their hopes and aspirations, and about the challenges that they face. It is also my responsibility, and indeed a pleasure for me, to speak about what might be done, and some things that are being done, to respond to these challenges. My position, since 1957 as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims bears no political mandate, it is an independent one from which I can speak to you openly.

Today in the occident, the Muslim world is deeply misunderstood by most. The West knows little about its diversity, about the religion or the principles which unite it, about its brilliant past or its recent trajectory through history. The Muslim world is noted in the West, North America and Europe, more for the violence of certain minorities than for the peacefulness of its faith and the vast majority of its people. The words "Muslim" and "Islam" have themselves come to conjure the image of anger and lawlessness in the collective consciousness of most western cultures. And the Muslim world has, consequently, become something that the West may not want to think about, does not understand, and will associate with only when it is inevitable.

Not only is this image wrong, but there are powerful reasons that we cannot overlook, for which the West and the Muslim world must seek a better mutual understanding. The first of those reasons is that with the Eastern bloc weakened militarily, financially and politically, the Muslim world is one of only two potential geopolitical forces vis-à-vis the West on the world stage; the other being the East Asian Tigers. There are large Muslim minorities living in, and impacting, many European countries. The Muslim world controls most of the remaining fossil fuel reserves. There is a resurgence of Islam in countries of strategic importance to the West such as Turkey. Several Muslim states have nuclear ambitions. The Gulf war proved that events in the Muslim world do have a direct impact on global economics and security. The West should ignore neither the evolution of the Muslim Central Asian Republics nor their interplay on the future of Russia. Much of Sub-Saharan Africa, is Muslim, and none of us can turn our backs on this continent in need.

The second reason why the Islamic world and the West should seek increased mutual understanding is that in the wake of the Cold War, it has become obvious that violence and cruelty of all ilk are a plague gaining ground around the globe. It can be military, or para-military and brutal, or it can be structural and inconspicuous, and no less brutal. It ranges from suicide bombings to ethnic cleansing to the forgetting and abandoning of large segments of society, even by industrialised nations such as this one.

Against this worrying global background it must be made utterly clear that in so far as Islam is concerned, this violence is not a function of the faith itself, as much as the media would have you believe. This is a misperception which has become rampant, but which should not be endowed with any validity, nor should it be accepted and given credibility. It is wrong and damaging. The myth that Islam is responsible for all the wrong doing of certain Muslims may well stem from the truism that for all Muslims, the concepts of Din and Duniya, Faith and World, are inextricably linked. More so than in any other monotheistic religion of the world. The corollary is that in a perfect world, all political and social action on the part of Muslims would always be pursued within the ethical framework of the faith. But this is not yet a perfect world. The West, nonetheless, must no longer confuse the link in Islam, between spiritual and temporal, with that between state and church.

With the deaths of King Charles the First, and Louis the Sixteenth, Western culture initiated a process of secularisation which grew into present day democratic institutions, and lay cultures. Islam, on the other hand, never endorsed any political dogma. So the historical process of secularisation which occurred in the West, never took place in Muslim societies. What we are witnessing today, in certain Islamic countries, is exactly the opposite evolution,

the theocratisation of the political process. There is no unanimity in the Islamic world on the desirability of this trend but it would certainly be less threatening if the humanistic ethics of the faith were the driving force behind the processes of change.

The news-capturing power of this trend contributes to the Western tendency to perceive all Muslims or their societies as a homogenous mass of people living in some undefined theocratic space, a single "other" evolving elsewhere. And yet with a Muslim majority in some 44 countries and nearly a quarter of the globe's population, it should be evident that our world cannot be made up of identical people, sharing identical goals, motivations or interpretations of the faith. It is a world in itself, vast and varied in its aspirations and its concerns. Is there not something intellectually uncouth about those who choose to perceive 1 billion people of any faith as a standardised mass?

It is possible that the near-total burden under-development from which only a few Muslim countries have yet been able to extricate themselves, unites us in the eyes of the West and thus sets us apart from it. No world faith, perhaps, has such a high concentration of people living in poverty and fear, from disease to political disenchantment, to the defencelessness of national integrity, from the loss of cultural identity to confusion in the face of the new forces of pluralism, free market economics and meritocracy. No reasonable or equitable mind, could question either the logic or the justification for our fear of occidentalisation, or the loss of our Muslim identity. No one could question our fear of the disassociation of our belief and practice from our secular lives, of our difficulties in producing and managing wealth, of our need to create a system of laws compatible with the ethics of our faith, but no less compatible with today's world and the needs of tomorrow.

The Muslim world, once a remarkable bastion of scientific and humanist knowledge, a rich and self-confident cradle of culture and art, has never forgotten its past. The abyss between this memory and the towering problems of tomorrow would, cause disorientation even to the most secure societies .

You may ask, and justly so, what has happened to that world, and why has it reached such an advanced stage of fragility? Many contemporary problems in the Islamic world are the result of punctual political conflicts, prompted by the end of colonialism and the Cold War. Are the roots of the conflict in Kashmir not anchored in the partition of India in 1947? Are not the civil wars in Afghanistan and Tajikistan due more to the political convulsions of the dying Cold War than to religious conflict between Muslims themselves? Is the conflict in Algeria caused by differences in interpretation of the faith among Algerians, or by an attempt at political change which put to the test, has failed? These conflicts are some of the less fortunate legacies of Islamic states having been used, like others, as pawns or proxies in the Cold War.

Yet many other problems facing the Muslim world now, have existed for centuries. From the seventh century to the thirteenth century, the Muslim civilizations dominated world culture, accepting, adopting, using and preserving all preceding study of mathematics, philosophy, medicine and astronomy, among other areas of learning. The Islamic field of thought and knowledge included and added to much of the information on which all civilisations are founded. And yet this fact is seldom acknowledged today, be it in the West or in the Muslim world, and this amnesia has left a six hundred year gap in the history of human thought.

It was during the 15th century that Muslim civilisation began a period of decline, losing ground to European economic, intellectual and cultural hegemony. Islamic culture began to be marginalised, and worse yet, its horizons narrowed until it lost its self-respect, and pursued no further the cultural and intellectual search on which it was embarked. Even as Muslim learning was studied in the greatest universities in Europe, La Sorbonne, Oxford, Bologna, it was being forgotten in all Muslim societies from the fourteenth century on. Little of what was discovered and written by Muslim thinkers during the classical period is taught in any educational institution, and when it is, due credit is not given. This gap in global knowledge of the history of thought, and the faith, of a billion people is illustrated in innumerable ways, including in such diverse worlds as that of communication and of architecture. Our cultural absence in the general knowledge of the Western world partially explains why your media

sees Islamic thought as an ideological or political determinant in predominantly Muslim cultures, and refers to mere individuals affiliated with terrorist organisations as Muslim first, and only then by their national origin or ideological or political goals.

This is a considerable problem for the Islamic world in its relations with the West, particularly because of the impact your public opinion has on the decisions of your democratic governments. But rather than to dwell upon this sensitive issue, I would like to illustrate how, in another professional field - architecture - an analogous breach is being filled through an unprecedented joint effort by the Islamic world and the West.

Since 1957, the Aga Khan Development Network has been involved in building a large number of schools, hospitals, housing estates and other constructions in the Muslim world. It became clear that whilst the use of the building was usually adequately defined they had less and less to do with the architectural traditions of the societies that they were to serve. I found that others too were facing the same questions. Together, we enlarged our questioning, and it became starkly apparent that across the whole of the Muslim world, practically without exception, its great traditions of architecture had disappeared from its cultural expression. Once the issue had been identified, some of the greatest architects in the world, from some of the finest schools, and men and women from all disciplines and all religious backgrounds - Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist - joined me, creating an Architectural Award and educational programmes to help address the crisis in our own built environment. The aim was to widen for people of all backgrounds, the sources of knowledge and inspiration for the design languages of Islamic societies. After two decades the best buildings and spaces of the Islamic world, evaluated by international juries of the highest calibre, are exceptional once again. Designed and used by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, they now address some of the most intractable problems of our age: urbanisation, management of the built environment and shelter for the very poor.

This exemplifies the kind of remarkable outcome that educated men and women, from around the world, can achieve, in as little as twenty years, to begin reversing the hundreds of years of decay which have eroded our cultural identity.

Much of the West's knowledge, and intellectual potential, is concentrated in universities such as Brown, that have, in recent years, worked their way much deeper into their wider societies. They have developed global objectives addressing global issues, thus becoming more accessible as partners in the development efforts of the Third World.

The Aga Khan University was founded thirteen years ago in Pakistan with planning assistance from Harvard. It was the first private self-governing university in that country of 125 million people. Medical Science was the initial field of engagement. As Pakistan had one of the lowest ratios in the world of nurses to doctors, and the nursing profession was mired in mediocrity, social unacceptability and low pay, nursing became our priority. With the assistance of McMaster University in Ontario, a curriculum was designed and a School of Nursing launched. In addition to becoming a leading academic institution, it has transformed the role of women in society by providing them with new educational and professional opportunities. This solution to some of Pakistan's most pressing health care problems, which has also enhanced the social self-worth and professional status of women in the country, may soon be replicated in other areas. Under the university's international charter, the nursing school now envisages the creation of an Institute of Advanced Nursing Studies in East Africa to extend the same professional and societal opportunities to the women of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and further afield.

First World knowledge can be introduced and creatively absorbed into third-world environments to assist in resolving some of its most challenging development problems. Success will depend, at least partially, on the adaptability of the knowledge to be shared, and the willingness and receptivity of the social structures that will be affected. The knowledge exists and its adaptability is proven, the material resources can be found, but the social and cultural empathy which prepare any successful long-term process of human change from one society to another, are still deeply lacking.

The same consideration also applies to ideas. Concepts such as meritocracy, free-world economics, or multi-party democracy, honed and tested in the West may generally have proven their worth. But valid though they may be, responsible leadership in the Islamic world must ask if they can be adapted to their cultures which may not have the traditions or infrastructure to assimilate them. There is a real risk that political pluralism could harden latent ethnic or religious divisions into existing or new political structures. There is a real risk that market place economics could lead to ruthless competition, and increased concentration of wealth, further marginalising the existing poor. There is a real risk that meritocracy could exacerbate, for example, the existing problem of equitable access to quality education and sophisticated healthcare. Although the modern page of human history was written in the West, you should not expect or desire for that page to be photocopied by the Muslim world.

You the graduates, are entering your own society at a time when it is questioning many of its own determinants, and seeking stability, direction and inspiration from its own ethical and cultural roots. In the Muslim world we are doing the same.

No doubt you are seeking to prepare yourselves, as well as you can, for the risks and opportunities of the suddenly globalised environment in which you will live and work. In the Muslim world we are doing the same.

As globalisation unfolds, the Islamic world will be there in myriad ways. Multitudinous encounters are inevitable.

It is time for all of us to ask: how can we ensure that these innumerable contacts will result in a more peaceful world and a better life?

We should be seeking out and welcoming these encounters and not fearing them. We should be energising them with knowledge, wisdom and shared hope.

But this will be enormously difficult to achieve unless the civilisations and faith of the Islamic world are part of the mainstream of world culture and knowledge, and fully understood by its dominant force which is yours in the West.

In this exhilarating new world of unprecedented knowledge, freedom to use it outside worn out dogmas, and immediate global communication, it should be a matter of serious concern to the West and the Islamic world, that such a deep gulf of misinformation and misunderstanding subsists. That gulf conditions the way we perceive each other. Its omnipresence damages our capacity to build a better world for ourselves. And it has no basis in logic. The great Muslim philosopher al-Kindi wrote eleven hundred years ago, "No one is diminished by the truth, rather does the truth ennoble all". That is no less true today.

It is only here in the West that governments, intelligentsia, media, entrepreneurs are all - in some way - linked to your universities. They impact, or actually create, much of our world's general and specialised knowledge. They challenge what may be wrong and validate what is correct. They research what they do not know. Is it not time for you to use these tools to build a bridge across the gulf of knowledge which separates the Islamic world from the West? Do you question that we will be by your side? No, if I can judge from my own experience.

We have much to build with. A common Abrahamic, monotheistic tradition. Common ethical principles, founded on shared human values. Common problems of yesterday, resolved together. Common challenges of tomorrow, that we can best face together. These, and all that much more that I cannot enumerate, but are fact, are the materials with which to build a bridge. Enlightened by sound intellect, I see its structure strongly built from the realities of our world. But any structure requires bonding, and of all the bonds that can link societies, America epitomises the strongest. It is called hope. The right to hope is the most powerful human motivation I know. Its importance has been paramount in the history of this nation. It is a reasonable expectation that the next generation will be better equipped to address the challenges of life than the present one. How beautiful that bridge of hope would be between the West and the Islamic world.

## **Keynote Address at the Commonwealth Press Union Conference**

**His Highness the Aga Khan**  
**October 17, 1996 Cape Town, South Africa**

Mr Chairman, my Lords, distinguished guests, members of the Commonwealth Press Union, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an enormous pleasure for me to join you today. I only wish I could have attended all of your sessions, for your programme touches on many subjects which are of great interest to me - and your speakers have included an impressive array of distinguished personalities.

In fact, as I looked at the long list of those who have already come to this podium, I wondered whether you would have any capacity left to absorb whatever I might say!

It was a great comfort, therefore, to see that, as the first speaker on the morning after a day of R & R, I could attack you while you were still fresh!

As I prepared for this talk I also wondered whether you would have the foggiest notion of why I was invited to this conference.

Who is the Aga Khan after all - and what is he doing here?

Some of you may have known that my title - which I have held since 1957 - means that I am the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. But I suspect that this phrase only makes my appearance here seem even more incongruous.

Others may have seen my name connected with the breeding and racing of thoroughbreds - but this connection will also seem incongruous for many of you and won't help much at all in explaining my place on this programme.

Still others of you may have heard me described as a "Paper Tiger", in a recent book by that name which portrayed a long list of international publishing figures - thus the pun on the term "Paper Tiger". We were all people whom the author took to be "media moguls".

I am not sure whether it is better to be called a "media mogul" or a "paper tiger". Personally, I would prefer to have been called a mogul tiger!

Perhaps all of these incongruities will seem less puzzling if I point out that, in the Islamic tradition, there is no sharp separation of the spiritual and material worlds - which is so pronounced in some faiths. For all Muslims, the concepts of Din and Dunya, Faith and World, are inextricably linked. So it is not such a surprising or incongruous thing for a Muslim leader also to be involved in the world of business, the world of sport, the world of science - or the world of publishing.

Nor does it seem incongruous for me to be speaking to an audience which represents large populations in the developing world - where my family has worked for generations and I have concentrated so much of my work over the past four decades. My presence here today, in fact, grows directly out of my interest in the developing world and the forces that shape it, including the critical influence of the press.

The intertwining of these two interests - the developing world and the newspaper world - began for me in Kenya nearly forty years ago - when the British government was moving away from its colonial role. It became clear to me that this weaning process, in the political realm, could never wholly succeed unless it was matched by a similar process in the realm of public education and journalism.

At that time, East African journalism largely meant colonial journalism - and it was to help change that picture and with the encouragement of young African pre-independence politicians that I entered the newspaper field.

Our objective as we began our venture was to create a different sort of newspaper company, one that would truly speak for the new Kenyan nation. Our first step was to purchase a Swahili publication in Nairobi called Taifa - and we made it our base. A new English language paper - the Nation - came a bit later. And through both newspapers we have since pursued a single mission: to report and reflect on those matters which are of direct and proper concern to the indigenous majority of Kenyans.

I tell this story because so many of you share my interest in journalism as a force of development. And I suspect, as a result, that you have been asking many of the same questions I have been asking.

One of these questions looms particularly large as we approach a new century. It is a question which arises in every part of the world where people of diverse cultures are building new relationships. And the question is simply this: how can the rapid acceleration of contact among these cultures be turned into co-operation rather than conflict?

Or to put it another way: How can the growing demand for cultural integrity be reconciled with the dazzling rise of "the global village?"

The Commonwealth experience is itself a tremendous resource as we explore this question. And so is the profound experience of the country in which we are meeting this week. Indeed, the recent progress of South Africa in bridging historical gulfs while honouring historical identities is one of the most inspiring stories of the twentieth century.

Such inspiring stories will be increasingly important for us as time moves on. For the challenge I am describing will grow more difficult as contact among cultures escalates in intensity.

The notion that our planet is shrinking is a commonplace one - but it has recently taken a radical new turn. It is no longer a simple matter of geography, with cultures bumping up against one another - and struggling over borders and territories. Thanks to new methods of communication, cultures now increasingly intermingle - mixing with growing familiarity.

Some say that the fall of communism has brought us to "The End of History". But an even more profound development has been "The End of Geography". The connection between community and geography has been broken. A single community can thrive across immense distances, while a tiny dot of land can be home to many communities.

Not only can we transport ourselves in a few hours to any spot on the planet, we can also transport our words and our values, our songs and our dreams, our newspapers and our films, our money and our credit, our books and even our libraries to any part of the world - in a fraction of a second. And we can do so at a rapidly shrinking cost - and a rapidly accelerating pace.

Some suggest that the developing world, and Africa in particular may be left behind by this revolution in communications technology - or worse still, be drowned by a burgeoning flood of information and influence. But I would argue that societies which have invested less in old technologies have the potential to leapfrog more quickly into new technologies. The telecommunications revolution - including the Internet and World Wide Web - is providing us with ever greater power at ever lower prices. And this fact could help enormously in redressing earlier imbalances in information flows.

Already we see hints of what new developments in tele-medicine or in tele-education can mean to rural communities - as they suddenly participate in advances which once were

distant dreams. The "end of geography," after all, can also mean the end of isolation - and the end of isolation can mean an end to ignorance and impoverishment.

But if new technology can break down walls which have isolated whole communities from progress and enlightenment, that same technology can also remove the barriers to less welcome change. The communications revolution is a two-edged sword, opening exciting doors to the future, yes, but also threatening venerable cultures and traditional values.

On every hand we can see the rise of the global economy - and with it the global career and multinational family life, international fads and intercontinental life styles. Some find this process exhilarating, but many others find it frightening. And some even fear that this new intermingling of cultures will someday lead to cultural homogenisation.

Yet even as the waves of globalisation unfurl so powerfully across our planet, so does a deep and vigorous counter-tide. In every corner of the world one can also sense these days a renewal of cultural particularism, a new emphasis on ethnic and religious and national identity. What some have called a "new tribalism" is shaping the world as profoundly on one level as the "new globalism" is shaping it on another.

Sometimes this new tribalism can be a liberating thrust, as was the case when national movements overthrew the communist empire. Sometimes it can express itself in terribly destructive ways, as in the former Yugoslavia, or in Rwanda or Burundi. Sometimes it means a radical casting off of foreign influences, as happened in Iran. Or it can take on a separationist personality, as has been the case from Quebec to Kurdistan, from Scotland to Sri Lanka, from Northern Italy to East Timor. From the most developed to the least developed countries, we also see a resurgence of protectionism, a wariness about foreign immigration, a fascination with ancient languages, a rise in religious fundamentalism.

It is not surprising, of course, that the global and the tribal impulse should surge side by side. The desire to protect what is familiar intensifies in direct proportion to the challenge of what is different.

Wherever we look, we find people seeking refuge from the disorienting waves of change in the tranquil ponds of older and narrower loyalties, in the warmth of familiar memories, in the comfort of ancient rituals.

This recovery of cultural identity can be a nourishing and creative force, to be sure. But it can also mean a world where we define ourselves by what makes us different from others - and thus a world of chronic conflict.

Surely, one of the great questions of our time is whether we can learn to live creatively with both the global and the tribal impulse, embracing the adventure of a broader internationalism even as we drink more deeply from the wellsprings of a particular heritage.

The communications revolution means either a growing "homogenisation" that we know breeds its own hostile reactions, or we can search for a better course. We can hope that the spirit of the 21st century will be a spirit of Creative Encounter.

And this brings me back to the topic of publishing. For the spirit of Creative Encounter will never become a dominant force in our world without the strong and effective leadership of the information media.

How can the press best contribute to a spirit of Creative Encounter - here in Africa and around the world? One simple requirement towers above all others: the ability to respect that which is truly different, to understand that which we do not embrace.

It is not as easy as it sounds. For it means much more than tolerance and forbearance. The word sensitivity is one of the most overused words of our time - and one of the least

honoured. Why? Because sensitivity is too often seen as an emotion which can simply be willed into existence by a generous soul.

In truth, cultural sensitivity is something far more rigorous, something that requires a deep intellectual commitment. It requires a readiness to study and to learn across cultural barriers, an ability to see others as they see themselves.

Cultural sensitivity is hard work.

We live in a time when the quantity of information has exploded in incalculable ways. Data flows in greater volumes, at higher speeds, over greater distances to larger audiences than ever before. And yet the result has not been greater understanding or enlightenment. In fact, it has often been just the reverse.

One is reminded of T S Eliot's haunting question: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

Only as we reach beyond mere information and superficial knowledge can the spirit of Creative Encounter flourish.

Again, it is the press which should lead the way - not just newspapers and broadcasting outlets, but also the news service and press agencies which serve them and the organisations which support them. For centuries, the press has cast itself as the champion of understanding and enlightenment. And yet, even as the press has become more international, it has often left a trail of misunderstanding in its wake.

Confident that more information is a good thing in and of itself, the press has often focused too much on the quantity of what it can deliver, and too little on the quality of what it presents.

But if the media have sometimes been part of the problem - amplifying the threatening aspects of globalisation - then the media can also be part of the solution. If a careless or superficial press can exacerbate the clash of cultures, then a more sensitive and studious press can accomplish the opposite: The same media which serves to distort or discredit old cultures, can also be used to revalidate them, and to help explain them to others.

In some cases, this will mean a greater effort to adapt to the world's ways - to write or speak in the English language, for example, as we tell old stories to new audiences. If the mysteries of ancient Samarkand or Turfan or Kashgar are relayed predominantly in Uzbek or in Uygur, then the sharing will be incomplete - and inconsequential. Global technologies imply the use of a global language - not to obliterate old traditions, but to rescue and revivify them.

There was a time when a variety of authentic cultures could thrive because of their separation from one another. But that day is past. The only answer now is that we come to understand and appreciate one another. And in that endeavour the media must play a central role.

I thought I would use the remainder of my time this morning to discuss three specific challenges which I believe the media must meet or obstacles it must overcome if it is to foster a spirit of Creative Encounter.

1 The first is the imperative need for expanded expertise, for a higher level of professional knowledge.

It is no longer enough that a journalist be a curious layman, who writes clearly and asks good questions. Good journalists in our time must be well-educated journalists. They must include in their number linguists able to understand the expressions of other cultures, anthropologists who can consider their deeper meanings, in addition to experts trained in their laws and histories, in their economics and sociology, and in a wide variety of other disciplines. Our publications must have access to a wide array of professional insights - not only through their



own journalists, but also through the better use of press agencies and news services and outside guest writers.

The Commonwealth Press Union has done a great deal over the years to improve the level of journalistic education - in many parts of the world. In the years ahead, such work will be more important than ever.

As an example of the need for greater expertise, I hope you won't mind if I share an example which is particularly close to my heart. I refer to the superficial and misleading way in which much of the world's media treats the world of Islam. Muslims now constitute nearly a quarter of the world's people. They comprise a majority of the population in some 44 countries and no less than 435 million live in the Commonwealth. And yet, this vast and varied group is often viewed by the rest of the world as a standardised, homogenous mass.

If asked to characterise Islam, many non-Muslims would have little to say, except perhaps that the world of Islam seems to them a distant and different world, a strange and mysterious place, a world which makes them a bit uncomfortable, and perhaps even a bit afraid.

The cultural contexts in which over one billion Muslims have been reared and shaped are simply not understood in much of the world. Even the most basic elements of 1400 years of Islamic civilization are absent from the curricula in most of the world's schools. The subject is just not on the world's educational radar screen. And the result is an enormous vacuum. When developments in Islamic societies break into the headlines, few journalists, and even fewer of their readers can bring the slightest sense of context to such news.

These failures are compounded by our pernicious dependence on what I call "crisis reporting" - the inclination to define news primarily as that which is abnormal and disruptive. As one journalist puts it: "It is the exceptional cat, the one who climbs up in a tree and can't get down, that dominates our headlines, and not the millions of cats who are sleeping happily at home".

Most of the public, however, has no context in which to place the story of the exceptional cat that climbs a tree. And without that context, the casual reader or viewer, never hearing about the cats that stay home, comes to think of all cats as tree-climbing pests who are forever imposing on the fire departments of the world to bring out their ladders and haul them down to safety.

Unfortunately, much of what the world thinks about Islam nowadays has been the result of crisis reporting. When terms like Shi'a and Sunni first entered the world's vocabulary, for example, it was in the emotional context of revolutionary Iran. Similarly, recent press references to the Shari'a, the traditional Islamic system of jurisprudence, are illustrated by its manifestations in Afghanistan.

Journalists learn to use these words - but how many of them know what they really mean? How many of them understand, for example, that the Shari'a is seen by most Muslims as a changing body of law, subject to what we call the fiqh, the capacity for evolving interpretation. How many of them are aware of the selective and moderate application of the Shari'a in the legal systems of those Islamic countries which do allow its application? How many of them know that Arabic translators of the Old Testament used the word Shari'a to designate the Torah, underlining a shared perception of the Divine Law that governs the spiritual relationship between God and His believers? How many are knowledgeable enough to appreciate the Shari'a's illuminating qualities in civil law?

Without a proper sense of context, it is little wonder that those exceptional instances of Muslims theocratising Islamic politics are mistaken for the norm, and that the humanistic temper of Islamic ethics is overlooked. Among some observers, there is even a tendency to see political violence as a function of the faith itself - when in fact nothing could be further from the truth.

You may agree that all of this is regrettable. But I wonder how many of our news divisions, our reporting teams, our agency staffs, or even our journalism schools, include people who can recognise such distortions, much less set them right. When the educational background is so barren and when the rhythm of our learning - as reporters and as readers - is so often that of crisis, crisis, crisis, then deep misunderstanding will be the inevitable result.

I am not suggesting that every journalist must become an expert on Islam. But it would help greatly if more journalists at least were aware of when - and where they need to turn to find out more.

It should not be forgotten that journalists also have a broader educational role - a responsibility to provide readers and viewers with a context in which to understand individual events properly.

My concern about Islam is just one of countless examples which could be cited to make this point. I could also present a long list of examples growing out of my experience with media reporting on Africa.

The central point is simply this: no matter what group or what subculture we are covering, we must insist that our journalism is not only about what is perceived as unusual and bizarre.

If the spirit of the 21st century is to be a spirit of Creative Encounter among cultures, then journalists must relay to us the deeper truths about our neighbours, giving us a better sense of how they typically feel and think. They must dedicate themselves not merely to being "up-to-the-minute" but also to seeing each passing minute within the larger sweep of history.

But there is no way this can happen - in an ever more complex world - without a substantially higher level of journalistic education and expertise. And that is the first of the three challenges I would present to you this morning.

2 The second challenge is equally demanding. It has to do with the goals we set for ourselves, and the need - as we set those goals - to rise above a domineering profit motive.

That sounds like a cliché. But clichés often identify important problems. And no media problem is more evident to me than the terrible distortions which occur when the highest priority, from influential world media groups to Third World pamphleteering, is merely to "maximise profitability".

Invariably, what the pursuit of short-term media profit means is the near-term pursuit of the largest possible audience - the highest ratings, the best demographics, the most impressive circulation and advertising numbers. Inevitably, it seems designing products with instant mass or sectarian appeal - focusing on what is divisive or dramatic or diverting or sensational - at the expense of what is in the interests of society or truly significant.

Particularly deplorable is the growing journalistic tendency to exploit "quirks" in the human or societal psyche. This is a major problem in the developing and the developed world alike. By "quirks" I mean curiosities, idiosyncrasies, anomalies, and dormant resentments or frustrations which can be developed among various segments of society. An irresponsible communicator can create an appetite for such materials by catering to one public's voyeuristic curiosity, through the invasion of privacy for instance, or by pandering to the sectarian prejudice of one group about another. A market space for such offerings can be teased into existence and then prodded and nourished so that it becomes not only economically viable but commercialy irresistible as well.

The public, at least in many Third World societies, is not as voyeuristic as some may assume. It is, however, immediately sensitive to secretarian views or news and the converse seems to hold true overall for Western societies.

The key is to sort out properly what belongs in the public sphere - and what does not. And the complicating factor is that different cultures will draw that line in different ways. The same news story can thus have a different impact with different audiences.

It is not easy to be a sensitive journalist in a multi-cultural world. But the task will be far more difficult if our central concern is to attract the largest possible audience with the most easily digestible headlines.

The runaway profit motive is a culprit that must be curbed. But having said this, let me also argue that the best way to organise any publishing enterprise is as a private business entity. Private capital is the backbone of an independent press - and private capital will flow only where it sees the prospect of reasonable long-range earnings.

Only when newspapers are healthy in the financial sense can they be healthy in the journalistic sense - attracting and developing talent, investing in technology, pursuing difficult stories, eliminating dependencies on patronage resisting the pressures of aggressive advertisers on the one hand and the lure of passing tastes on the other.

Our experience with the Nation newspapers in Kenya has demonstrated that journalistic improvement goes hand in hand with financial health. Both the content of our publications and the methods for producing them have grown more complex in recent years - and the only way to keep pace was by making new investments out of increasing earnings. The Nation was in the 1960s among the very first newspapers outside North America to embrace computerised typesetting. More recently, we have moved into the new multimedia technologies - our major publications are now globally available "online." And before the end of this current year we will open, just outside Nairobi, one of the most advanced new printing plants anywhere in the developing world.

There has been much discussion of late about how to improve the quality of journalism in places where the traditions of good journalism are still thin. But this endeavour will not only depend on the quality of editors and reporters. It will also depend on the skills and energies of capable commercial managers. Fostering business skills among media executives is a critical ingredient in the development equation; it too is part of creating an enabling publishing environment.

In its proper context, the profit motive will contribute to the success of all our publications. But only if we can avoid too much focus on short-term financial gain. And that, in sum, is the second of the three challenges.

3 The third of the media challenges I would discuss today is the need to balance concerns about press freedom with a greater emphasis on press responsibility. In my view, we are sometimes too preoccupied with the rights of the press as an independent social critic - and we pay too little attention to the obligations of the press as an influential social leader.

Too often, the press seems to be caught up with that obsessive individualism which seems so rampant in our world, an expectation that we must make our way in life through a sort of meritocratic free-for-all, ignoring those who are hurt in the process and those who are left behind.

Too often, we join in the celebration of success for its own sake, regardless of the means by which it was achieved or its impact on society. Too often the media spotlight overlooks the corrupt or manipulative methodology and dramatises the triumphant result. Too often, the right of an individual or the right of a publication to unfettered self-expression is enshrined as the most sacred of all values - independent of its impact on social or moral standards.

One of the most familiar of western political values is expressed in the phrase: "Freedom of the Press". I believe that Press Freedom, properly understood, is a universal human right. But we must be careful about how we define it and that it does not isolate the press from the rest of the social order. What is originally meant - and properly still means for me - is that the

press should be free from the control or constraint of governments, and strong enough to resist all forms of intimidation.

Why is this precept so important? Because the health of any government should depend on public evaluation of its work. Not even the most enlightened government can do this for itself. And only if a pluralistic press is allowed to report freely about any government, will the public be able to hold their governments accountable.

The problem comes, of course, when Freedom of the Press is stretched beyond this meaning and used to shield the press - not just from government interference, but from any sense of social accountability. And that is when press liberty turns into press license.

Just as press freedom is a means for holding governments accountable, so must the press itself be held accountable for the way it does its work.

Accountable to whom?

To the political leaders of the moment? Never.

To the larger community and the cultures that comprise it? Always - provided we see the community not as a mere majority of the moment, but as an organic, pluralistic entity.

A most remarkable thing in our experience is that the larger community has invariably demanded better forms of journalism. Despite their relative lack of formal education, the first readers of the Nation sought something well beyond what the colonial press had given them.

Through the years, answering to the wider community has posed a changing array of challenges. When the demand for self rule dominated everything, our tasks were fairly straightforward. The rise of tribal divisions which were then reflected in political parties complicated that picture, and so did the interplay of cold war rivalries. As the years passed, we also found that our work would sometimes be more in favour and sometimes less in favour with particular governments.

In recent years, the need for regional integration has become a central concern for the peoples of East Africa. Cross-border co-operation is essential if the patchwork quilt of small African nations is to cope effectively in a globalised economy. The Nation Group's commitment to regionalism was reflected in the founding, two years ago, of a successful regional newspaper, the weekly EastAfrican.

But perhaps the most dramatic way in which the Nation Group has expressed its ties to the larger community was through the broadening of its public shareholdings. We are particularly proud that a majority of the Nation's shares are owned by more than 9,000 indigenous Kenyan shareholders. This policy has widened the Group's financial base - making it a more stable and resourceful business. This policy has also broadened our social and cultural base - making our publications more responsive and responsible.

Our journalistic code - a set of explicit written standards about editorial goals and practices - was submitted to our shareholders for their deliberation and approval because we want our shareholders to feel involved and responsible, not just for the Nation's financial success but also for its moral success. They are, after all, the ultimate stewards, not only of the Nation's corporate body, but also of its journalistic soul.

In short, we have pursued a concept of Press Freedom which not only means Freedom "from" but also Freedom "to" - not just Freedom from improper governmental constraints but also Freedom to advance the common purposes which give meaning to our lives.

Such a sense of social accountability is not an easy thing to achieve. It must begin with those into whose care the institutions of the press have been entrusted, our editors and proprietors. Those who are in charge must really be in charge.

Freedom of the Press does not mean the right of any journalist to write and to publish anything he or she wants to say. It is not acceptable for a reporter to cry "censorship" when an editor or a publisher questions his accuracy or his judgement. Nor is it acceptable for editors, managers and proprietors to slip their solemn responsibilities by invoking the same line of defence.

They may sometimes say they don't want to "meddle" with the contents of their publications. This is a weak and dangerous excuse. And too often that comment really disguises an abdication of moral responsibility.

This abdication is particularly troubling when it is used by proprietors or editors to mask their personal quest for financial gain or political influence - or to sustain divisive sectarian agendas. For in the final analysis, the press and those who manage it must also be held accountable to the collective judgements of the community.

Responsible journalists and managers will not want to shield themselves from such judgements. To the contrary, they will eagerly seek them out. They will want to know what thoughtful readers are saying and how responsible advertisers are thinking. They will talk constantly with scholars and religious leaders, with artists and business leaders, with scientists and labour leaders, with educators and community leaders - and yes, with politicians and diplomats and governmental leaders as well. And through such continuing interaction they will develop and refine their sense of how the larger community can best be served.

Let me conclude by citing once again what I consider to be the enormous opportunity for the media to foster that new spirit of Creative Encounter which I described at the outset of this speech. And let me express my hope that as we in the press embrace that opportunity, we will respond creatively to the three challenges I have been discussing.

I hope, first, that we will contribute to a more expert and educated press - whose achievements can be measured in the depth of its journalistic insights as well as the speed of its crisis reporting.

I hope, secondly, that while recognising the importance of the financial viability of the media, we press leaders will put the profit motive in proper context. This means resisting the temptation to define everything in terms of profit, and giving audiences due credit by producing socially responsible publications, rather than catering to quirks and sectarianism.

And finally, I hope that we will recognise and foster press responsibility as vigorously as we defend press freedom.

## **Commencement Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology - May 27, 1994**

President Vest, Members of the corporation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, distinguished members of the Faculty, Mayor Reeves, happy graduates, even happier parents, and others gathered here today: I am pleased and honoured to be with you this morning.

MIT has shown a standard of excellence in education and research that sets a benchmark for universities, everywhere. You who have been at the Institute for years may be excused if you take this in stride, but for me, coming here for the first time in several years, the energy of the place is palpable.

Education has been important to my family for a long time. My forefathers founded Al Azhar University in Cairo some 1,000 years ago, at the time of the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt. Discovery of knowledge was seen by those founders as an embodiment of religious faith, and faith as reinforced by knowledge of workings of the Creator's physical world. The form of universities has changed over those 1,000 years, but that reciprocity between faith and knowledge remains a source of strength.

MIT has changed also over its 130 years. This university was initially designed to meet the needs of society in a newly industrialised world. As the world and its needs have evolved, so has MIT's curriculum. Steadily the emphasis on social sciences and humanities has expanded, as the Institute has recognised increasingly that the range of "technologies" that are needed to solve societal problems goes far beyond those of engineering and the natural sciences. The increased richness of education results in an increasingly versatile set of graduates.

As I look out over those gathered here, I see that MIT has changed in other ways. The great continents of the world are now represented in your student body and in your faculty. So, too, are the great religions of the world. MIT seems prepared to take advantage of excellence from all quarters, a fact that is sure to reinforce the Institute's future strength.

When I was thinking about the theme that I should choose for this talk, I considered first that Commencements are occasions to reflect on general truths, truths that will retain their validity over the course of your lives and over the wide range of intellectual interests that you graduates embody. But how is that search for generality to be squared with the very particular point in time that today represents? You and I are here, in a real sense, only because 1994 finds MIT and the world at distinctive stages of their evolution. Still, the particular can provide insight into the general, so my comments today will draw on the particular, in the hope of saying something of value about the general.

I shall talk today about encounters. Encounters. When two people meet. Or two particles. Or two cultures. In that crucial moment of interaction the results of an encounter are determined. In the simplest of encounters -- say, with two billiard balls -- the outcome is a predictable result of position, velocity and mass. But the encounters that interest me most are not so simple. In the encounters of people and cultures, much depends on the path that each has taken to that point. These are not stochastic processes. The subjects have histories. The encounter has complexity and rich dimensionality. The result of an encounter between two people or between two cultures is shaped by the assumptions of each, by their respective goals and -- perhaps most directly relevant to a university -- by the repertoire of responses that each has learned. Encounters therefore have aspects of both the general and the specific. What makes our current time distinctive are the new combinations of people and cultures that are participating in these encounters.

Two ongoing social and political changes illustrate the reasons for these new combinations. The first is the collapse of communism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. You graduates may feel that you have been at MIT forever, but it really is remarkable that the overturning of most of the Communist world has occurred since most of you started your studies here. You go out into a world where the roles are different from those that held when you entered. Colonialism

is moribund. No longer is it enough to decide whether one is aligned with Communism or Capitalism in a bipolar world. Now a full range of complicated choices is opened up to people in the developed and the developing world alike. A massive brake on change has been released. The potential for creative action, for creative encounters, is now much enhanced. This change is a work in progress, however. The potential of the moment must be seized, for conditions for change may not always be so propitious. There is the real possibility that the Soviet Union may reconstitute itself, if the social upheaval that accompanies political disintegration and economic reform is allowed to become less tolerable than the strictures of a totalitarian state.

While these shocks reverberate from the ex-Communist bloc, profound changes of a very different character are to be found in the Islamic world. Here the changes are in both perception and reality, and both of them are works in progress, too. The Islamic world is remarkably poorly understood by the West -- almost terra incognita. Even now, one sees pervasive images in the West that caricature Muslims as either oil sheikhs or unruly fundamentalists. The Islamic world is in fact a rich and changing tapestry, which the West would do well to understand. The economic power of the Islamic world is increasing, not so much because of Middle Eastern oil but because of the rapid growth of newly industrialising countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. Its population is increasing, and already represents nearly one-quarter of the world's total. It is remarkably diverse -- ethnically, economically, politically and in its interpretations of its own faith. The Muslim world no longer can be thought of as a subset of the developing world. Islam is well represented in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Western Europe -- and that presence is growing.

The religious diversity of Islam is important, and misunderstood by most non-Muslims. This is not the forum to go into the multiple reasons for this misunderstanding. But, for many in the West, the first awareness that there were two major branches of Islam -- Shia and Sunni -- came only with the Iranian revolution. That represents a superficiality of understanding that would be as though we Muslims only just learned that there were two branches of Christianity -- Protestant and Catholic -- and had no understanding of the Reformation, the authority of the Church or the ideas that led to the proliferation of Protestant sects in the 16th and early 17th century. Or as though we thought that most Americans were Branch Davidians.

In the face of such lack of knowledge about one quarter of the world's population, one may reasonably ask what the role of the university is in setting things straight. It seems clear to me that at the most basic level the university is responsible for helping its students to learn not only the simplifying principles that the various learned disciplines have found useful in understanding our world, but also the rich complexity -- of history and language and culture -- that make real life problems interesting and difficult. MIT now teaches both of these lessons well, and vigorously, but it seems not always to have done so. Indeed, I am told that at the opening of MIT, in 1865, one local newspaper reported with a note of triumph that the creation of MIT (quote) "sealed the fate ... of that system by which our youth waste the best portion of student life in burrowing into the grammars and dictionaries of races less enlightened than their own ...". (unquote). MIT has clearly come around to thinking that those "less enlightened races" have something to teach, and that teaching helps the university fulfil its potential. I would argue, however, that the university's potential is met not just in developing the intelligence of its students but also in bringing them to understand the importance of engaging themselves in solving the problems of the world. The great political and social changes around us are creating opportunities for service that promise to be deeply rewarding to persons with the engaged intelligence to be successful at important but difficult work.

Let me take one example to illustrate the challenging encounters to which today's graduates might apply their intelligence. Tajikistan is a mountainous country in Central Asia of 5 million people, more than 90%~ Muslim. As a republic in the former Soviet Union bordering China and Afghanistan, it had a strategic importance that dwarfed its natural resources. The Soviet Union therefore invested heavily in Tajikistan, building roads and power stations, supplementing food supplies and equipment, developing the educational and health systems. The result was a highly educated, sophisticated but largely rural population that managed its affairs well at home -- by the rules of the game at that time -- and provided well-developed human resources for export to other parts of the Soviet Union. With the fall of the Soviet

Union, things changed for Tajikistan. Subsidies, which had provided most of the Republic's budget and, for the remoter parts, 80% of the food supply, were cut off. The result has been hunger, shortages of fuel and clothing and deep uncertainty about the future. Long suppressed ethnic tensions -- between indigenous Tajiks, neighbouring Uzbeks and Kirghiz and immigrant Russians, among others -- became more evident as groups jostled for political and economic control. Religion emerged from private houses, where it had been practised covertly for 60 years, to become a manifest force.

Tajikistan has become the focus of one of the most interesting encounters of the day. It is here, and in the other Central Asian Republics, that three great cultures encounter one another: the ex-Communist world, the Muslim world, and the Western world. It is here that those three cultures could forge a success that would contrast starkly with the brutal failure in Bosnia. The result of the encounter in Tajikistan may determine much about the way history unfolds over the coming decades, so it is worth thinking a bit about the stance that each of these cultures might take in preparing for this encounter. That thought might lead one to ask what it would take for this, or any, encounter to be constructive. I suggest that there are four pre-requisites for success. For each of the cultures, the result should, first, draw on its strengths and, second, be consistent with its goals. Third, the result should be a sustainable improvement in the current situation. And fourth, the transition should be humane.

Each of these three cultures has something to bring to the solution of the problems of Tajikistan. The West has many strengths, but prominent among them are science and democracy (with their public mechanisms for self-correction) and also private institutions, liberal economics, and a recognition of fundamental human rights. The Muslim world offers deep roots in a system of values, emphasising service, charity and a sense of common responsibility, and denying what it sees to be the false dichotomy between religious and secular lives. The ex-Communist world, although it failed economically, made important investments in social welfare, with particular emphasis on the status of women, and was able to achieve in Tajikistan impressive social cohesion. These are a powerful array of strengths and goals. Just how to combine them to solve Tajikistan's problems is not clear. But if the outcome is to be sustainable, it seems necessary to concentrate resources on the development of private institutions, of accountable public institutions, and of human potential.

But how to get from here to there without inflicting cruel damage on a people already buffeted by shortages and change? Again, the way is not entirely clear, but one should strive to retain the powerful ties of mutual support that -- in different ways -- bind individuals together in Muslim and Communist societies. And one should see that the impressive gains in health and education are not lost in the transition, for it would be unconscionable to allow, for example, the equality of men and women that has been achieved in Tajikistan over the last 60 years to be erased in the transition to a market economy.

These are the prerequisites that I hope the representatives of these three important cultures will keep in mind as they have their encounter over Tajikistan. If the encounter of the Muslim world, the West and the ex-Communist world takes account of the need for each to draw on its own strengths, to be consistent with its goals, to strive for a sustainable, improved outcome and to ensure a humane transition, then the encounter will have been as successful as it is important. Indeed, the importance of Tajikistan has, if anything, increased in recent years, as events in neighbouring countries continue to remind us.

Turning back now to today's graduates, I hope that these four prerequisites applied equally to the encounter that you are just completing with MIT. Knowing the quality of faculty and students here, I have no doubt that the encounter between you and the faculty has drawn on your respective strengths. I hope each of you kept consistent with your goals, even as they may have evolved over your time here. The quality and sustainability of the outcome will be determined over the course of your lives. But reading the smiles among the graduates, I judge that the transition -- your time at MIT -- must have been tolerably humane.

In conclusion, I would recall the words of former MIT President James Killian Jr. Nearly 50 years ago he said (quote) "We need better linkages between science and the humanities,



with the object of fusing the two into a broad humanism that rests upon both science and the liberal arts and that does not weaken either. We need bifocal vision to thread our way among the problems of modern society." (unquote). That need to use the power of complementary academic disciplines remains true today.

What is now clear is the need also to draw on the wisdom of different cultures in solving those problems. Thank you, and please accept my best wishes for a lifetime of constructive encounters.

## **The Enabling Environment: An Urgent Challenge**

### **Keynote Address at the International Development Conference**

**His Highness the Aga Khan**

**March 18, 1987 Washington, D.C., USA**

Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am grateful to Mr McPherson for his kind and generous introduction, and I welcome this opportunity to share with a concerned and well informed audience some thoughts on the Third World today. To do so in the presence of my old friend Brad Morse gives me particular pleasure. To me, Mr. Morse is a symbol of a new pragmatism in development thinking that I sense in both the industrialised states and among the heterogeneous group of countries that are confusingly lumped together as the Third World. That term reminds me of a speaker who was explaining the role of UNDP. At the end of the speech, the Chairman thanked the speaker and said how glad he was to understand what UNDP did for the "underworld"!

As a development practitioner, I have a range of institutional responsibilities and interests in both the profit and voluntary sectors in Asia and Africa. While this has given me a broad and unusual perspective on Development issues, it has also given more chances than most to make mistakes! But I know from experience that neither profit nor non-profit ventures can be fully effective in serving societies unless there exists what I call an enabling environment for development.

Last October, the Aga Khan Foundation, together with the World Bank, the Government of Kenya, the African Development Bank and InterAction, sponsored a conference on "The Enabling Environment." The participants sought to determine how government, business and private voluntary organizations could work together to create the conditions of confidence, predictability and mutual trust that enable people and institutions to realize their full potential. It was the first time, to my knowledge, that the three sectors in Africa had met formally to discuss these common concerns. I was greatly heartened by the frankness of the discussions and the openness of all parties. There was excellent African participation, with an especially impressive private sector. It is encouraging to note that the Economic Council for Africa and groups in many countries have picked up this theme.

From these and other discussions, I am convinced we are in the midst of a sea of change in thinking about the development process in the Third World. For three decades, governments were at center stage. There was almost a blind faith in the ability of government to act as the locomotive of development. Governments were expected not only to educate the young and care for the sick, but, in many instances, to run vast segments of industry and to produce the savings required for investment.

While we must pay tribute to what has been achieved in much of the Third World during our lifetimes, the locomotive has run out of steam. Government capabilities and resources are stretched beyond the limit. And this is being recognized in all continents.

At the Enabling Environment Conference in Nairobi, there was general agreement on the need for new macroeconomic policies that would set more effective signals to spur the private and public sectors. Such agreement would have been inconceivable even five years ago. An extraordinary range of countries are now working to move towards better sets of prices, to reduce subsidies and market distortions. We have all witnessed the success of the Chinese providing incentives to 100 million farmers.

So the rules of economic life are beginning to change all over the world. In much of the Third World, the changes have been caused by necessity. Old patterns of production, and of providing social services, become insupportable in an age of high debt service and low commodity prices. The force of necessity has been buttressed by the intellectual logic of international development institutions, together with potent examples from Southeast Asia and from such countries as the Ivory Coast.

These policy changes are vitally important. They open the possibility for the release of human creativity and energies in a myriad of forms.

But I must share with you two deep concerns. The first is that the new policy environment in the Third World must be shown to work. It must provide widespread opportunity and benefits - and it must do so quickly. The adjustment processes in the new economic policies are causing hardships. Subsidies are being abandoned; services are being cut back; prices of staple foods and imports are rising. But if all political leaders can offer their peoples is an unending series of austerity measures and economic hardships, frankly we may lose the opportunity in this generation to help create broader-based, freer societies.

My second concern is that the policy changes taking place merely set the stage. The central question remains: How can the peoples of the Third World make use of these opportunities? There are many problems. In country after country, institutions have been eroded. Centers of higher education and research, once beacons of a new world, have sunk into a miasma of apathy and political interference. Too many cooperatives are moribund, inefficient or captured by the few. There is an unhealthy emphasis on the narrow interests of particular groups - the tribe, the caste, the sect - at the expense of the broader community. These problems are actually decreasing the capacity of Third World peoples to deal with the major issues of the Twenty-first Century.

So we have an opportunity and a challenge. I am convinced that the way we respond will influence the shape of the Third World for decades to come. I am equally sure that the heart of the response must be a systematic and sustained effort to foster effective institutions - especially in the private sector. For institutions are the vehicles to unleash the creativity and energy of billions of men and women.

Muhammad Iqbal, the great Islamic poet-philosopher, once said: "For the individual to be bound to society is a blessing: it is in a community that his work is perfected."

Now that we are approaching acceptance of the macro model, we must address the micro mechanisms. It is here, I believe, that the United States has vast experience that is applicable. When the U.S. was roughly the same age as most Third World nations are today, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote: "Nothing, in my opinion, is more deserving of our attention than the intellectual and moral associations of America. . . In democratic countries, the science of association is the mother of science; the progress of all the rest depends on the progress it has made."

It is precisely this "science of association" that must be enhanced in the Third World today, in order to make use of the opportunities opened by the policy changes. We need competent and effective institutions to handle not only today's problems but also tomorrow's challenges. How can many millions of small producers obtain access to inputs, credit, markets and the economies of scale that come about through association? How can we organize our health resources to provide cost-effective primary health care for all?

To answer these questions, I believe the voluntary sector has a great role to play. As in the United States, the voluntary ethos in the Third World is enormously powerful. The voluntary sector represents, and can develop, all that is finest in the human potential. It is now believed that 100 million people contribute their time and energies to the voluntary sector, working in health and nutrition programs, caring for refugees, experimenting with new approaches to income generation, and so on. In many countries, the voluntary sector can also stand as a courageous counterpoint to prevailing orthodoxy and to corrupt or tyrannical practice.

Yet the voluntary sector in the developing world is a fragile reed. It generally lacks resources and even self-confidence. Organizations are often too small and too poorly managed to be effective. Governments occasionally try to control or even intimidate them. And this sector has a tendency to follow a "charity" approach rather than directing itself to the major developments and changes needed for the future.

There is another dimension that is also important. Strengthening of individual institutions is not, in my view, sufficient. The development challenges of the next century-cities of 20 million people with their housing and infrastructure needs; feeding and clothing 7 billion people while improving the environment; providing jobs for an additional 100 million men and women each year-mandate an integrated approach. Institutions must find ways to work together more closely, to develop new visions to address these issues.

Let me cite a few examples. There is a tendency to separate the profit sector from the voluntary. But the potential for close and effective links must be enhanced. The business sector has much to offer, especially in terms of management and technology. The majority of the scarce managerial talent in the Third World lies in private business. How can we apply some of that talent to the broader social and economic problems facing the future? My own network of social service organisations derives much of its strength from professional and business men and women who volunteer their time and expertise to oversee the management of these organisations.

This is a considerable problem for the Islamic world in its relations with the West, particularly because of the impact your public opinion has on the decisions of your democratic governments. But rather than to dwell upon this sensitive issue, I would like to illustrate how, in another professional field - architecture - an analogous breach is being filled through an unprecedented joint effort by the Islamic world and the West.

The business and voluntary sectors can work together to unleash the creative energies of the informal sector, the many millions of tiny producers. In the far north of Pakistan, amidst the highest mountains of the world, I have sponsored a rural development program that is creating effective Village Organisations among nearly one million scattered and isolated people. These organisations provide the forum, the skills and the discipline for people to be able to determine their own futures. In four years, they have accumulated nearly \$1.5 million in savings. Infrastructure projects, constructed and maintained by the villagers, have irrigated thousands of acres of new land and built link roads to markets. From each village, representatives have been trained in a range of productive skills. And the Village Organizations are being linked to the modern banking sector and to large companies for input supply, quality control and help with marketing.

It is my profound conviction that steps to strengthen institutions and the linkages between them are critical to the freedom of the individual to be creative and productive in a socially responsible manner. This is the essence of the Enabling Environment. In the textbooks, most discussion of freedom centers on the prevention of absolute power. It is about checks and balances. The time has come to evolve concepts and practices of "positive freedom," the links between individuals and institutions and the rules of the game that encourage mutual trust, promote cooperation, unleash human potentials and make possible a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts.

Clearly, the principal burden of responding to this challenge lies with the Third World itself. The peoples of the developing world have a vast task to define a vision of the future - to design the institutions and systems, the skills and technologies that will permit the vast majority to participate actively in the development process. To this audience, however, I can ask what the West can offer. And I would like to hazard some suggestions.

I believe the Third World deserves strong political support as it embarks on this adventure in freedom and pluralism. Forty years ago, Western Europe was faced with a similar challenge to that I see for the Third World today. The United States responded with the Marshall Plan. The level of funding was certainly generous. But even more significant was the tangible sense of international solidarity that enabled Europeans to have the courage to invest in their own futures. Today, the Third World needs this kind of psychological boost to mobilize their societal strengths, to withdraw savings from mattresses and bangles and put them to use, and to face up to the difficult decisions ahead.

Second, I would like to see a broadening of the dialogue on the support and strengthening of institutions. For example, much of the strength of the voluntary sector in the U.S. stems from the stability of its financing. Both Europe and the Third World can learn from the experience of fiscal incentive to stimulate the voluntary effort. Again, developing countries are now recognizing that a proportion of their state enterprises are expensive and inefficient milestones. Let us learn more about the Western experience with privatisation and the private provision of effective social services.

I must also re-emphasise the time dimension. These experiments must show results quickly. I am not there to discuss the vital issues of debt finance or aid flows. But I should note that growth is a lubricant for individual and institutional development. It is also clear that efforts to develop private business would be enhanced by an expansion in world trade and a concerted effort to reduce discrimination against the products of millions of small producers from the Third World.

I am impressed by the large and growing number of examples of Western corporations and voluntary organisations that are already providing assistance - particularly in management and technology-to the private sector in the Third World. Just one example in a sensitive area, the Saint Petersburg Times is twinned with Nation Newspapers of Kenya to assist in the development of a competent, free and responsible press in East Africa. But I am convinced that much more must be done. We need imaginative intellectual leadership to make this a mass movement in which a huge range of Western organisations feels they have a stake. Surely, this is a challenge that Chambers of Commerce and associations of voluntary organisations, perhaps collaborating with universities and aid agencies, could take up.

Finally, let me state my conviction that the indigenous voluntary sector must be encouraged to enlarge its role in the development process. These agencies have the potential to draw hundreds of millions of people into direct participation in development. They can be cost-effective and innovative. But I have already noted that indigenous voluntary agencies often have weaknesses. Can we not combine Third World and Western resources in a concerted effort to improve the management, quality of work and effectiveness of indigenous voluntary agencies? Because they have received so little attention in the past, a relatively small effort to nourish this sector could pay high dividends. Above all, these agencies require a solid funding base. Would it not be possible to increase the proportion of aid funds that go directly to them? Would it be reasonable to suggest that 10 percent of the World Bank's profits should be used to strengthen indigenous voluntary agencies?

The influence of American ideas and of the generosity of its people has been profound over the last 40 years. In a world that is changing, unpredictable and often frightening, there are inevitable temptations to look inward and withdraw. This evening I have tried to share with you my belief that a vital opportunity is at hand. The opportunity exists to create, in much of the Third World, an enabling environment to bring out the very best of the human potential.

An Ayat in the Qur'an says: "Verily, God does not change man's condition unless they change that which is in themselves." We must show greater faith in the ability of the individual to be creative. We may be at a point in history in which the people of the Third World are both willing and able to act. We all share a responsibility to help create an environment to make this possible.

## **Speech at the Graduation Ceremony Organised by the Institute of Ismaili Studies and the University of London Institute of Education**

**His Highness the Aga Khan  
London, United Kingdom  
7 July, 1983**

Dr Taylor,  
Professor Lawton,  
Distinguished Guests.

It gives me very great pleasure to be here today and to accept Dr Taylor's invitation to present the first awards resulting from a collaborative programme which holds considerable promise for the future. The Institute of Ismaili Studies is indeed fortunate in being able to extend the scope of its cooperation with a university which is renowned for its international outlook and whose Institute of Education is held in such high esteem throughout the world. Nor can I let this occasion pass without adding my sincere congratulations to Dr Taylor on his becoming Principal-Designate of the University and to Professor Lawton on his promotion to be Director of the Institute. You have both shown our Institute a consideration and helpfulness for which we shall always be grateful and we all wish you both the greatest success in your new appointments.

Dr Taylor has been kind enough to refer to the network of Aga Khan educational institutions in the Third World. At the apex of this educational structure stands the Aga Khan University, a major aim of which is to identify the openings for new educational programmes in the developing countries and in addressing those openings to set the highest possible standards. This pursuit of excellence is the inspiration of our schools at every level and an important factor in achieving it is the interchange of ideas and skills with suitable institutions in the western world. The new joint course which starts this month between the University of London Institute of Education here, our own Institute of Ismaili Studies and McGill University in Canada will be a prime example of how beneficially these interchanges can be organised. Future students who qualify from this course will take new ideas and techniques to invigorate our schools in the Third World, and to bring about the transformations which current problems demand, as I hope will you who are about to receive your awards today.

This is therefore an appropriate moment to reflect briefly on the present role of education in the Islamic world.

The Islamic world, as we all know, is being compelled to face two challenges at the same time. That of dealing with the Islamic countries' own indigenous problems, and that of adapting to twentieth century western technology to those countries' development needs. How we meet these challenges will condition our ability to make progress both within our own context and in the context of the world as a whole. Education is crucial to this, because education determines people's approach to the widest problems facing civilisation. Both my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, who created the basic structure of the Aga Khan institutions, and I myself, in building on that structure, have been deeply aware that education is the key to such widely ranging endeavours as creating a modern economy; as adapting the system of Islamic jurisprudence to present day conditions; as improving the role and status of women in society; as creating a physical environment of buildings which are sympathetic to Islamic culture and tradition. Education is the key to all this and more. It is fundamental to rural progress. It will equip the youth of Islam for the future, whether at village level, in nations, or in the Ummah as a whole. This is why the traditional educational patterns which we have inherited need to be analysed and, where necessary, re-structured.

I have often discussed education with leading Muslim thinkers and asked such questions as to how the traditional Qur'anic school or madrasah can continue to co-exist successfully with modern secular educational systems which are often rooted in a basically alien colonial mould. How can this duality be resolved?

Some ways towards resolving it may emerge from the course the students here today have completed. You have been educated in both religious studies and in teacher training. In particular – and I attach high importance to this – you have studied the development of curricula in schools and you have qualified to teach other subjects besides religion. You have made use of a special option to study contemporary Islamic questions and how education can address them. You will have an important role in maintaining and modernising the standards of education in our schools, as well as in the training of future generations of teachers.

Let me conclude by reminding you that ultimately the future of education in our Aga Khan schools will be in your hands and the hands of those who follow in your footsteps. You have been lucky to be the first to benefit from what I hope will be a long and fruitful collaboration between us and this eminent University. We have a great deal for which to thank the University of London Institute of Education, not least the thoughtful and detailed advice of Professor Peter Williams on the re-acquisition of our schools in Pakistan. Indeed personally I have a very long standing reason to respect the high intellectual achievements of London University. And it is something I know London University does not know about. As an undergraduate many years ago at Harvard my required reading included the works of Professor Bernard Lewis, who was until 1974 Professor of the History of the Near and Middle East at this University's School of Oriental and African Studies. London University has given all of you qualifying today a great opportunity and I am sure that you will justify the trust which we are all placing in you.

Thank you.

## **Speech to the Asia Society**

**His Highness the Aga Khan  
September 25, 1979 New York, USA**

Mr Talbot, ladies and gentlemen, honoured guests and members of the Asia Society,

By the Islamic calendar we will in just a few months enter the 1400th year of our faith. In the Christian accounting of time, we stand on the brink of the 21st century. It seems fitting to reflect, to consider what Islam has been and what it is to become in this new age. It is a time to speak out about hazards and about visions.

An overwhelming array of questions face all of us both East and West in the challenging years that are upon us. Political, social, economic and spiritual problems surround us and must be addressed with all the compassion and commitment we can summon.

In my own commitment to the well being of the Ismaili community, I have come to be ever more concerned with the physical form that the Islamic world of the future will take. The houses we live in, our places of work, the institutions that serve us, the gardens and parks where we rest, the markets and, of course, the mosques.

As descendants of the magnificent builders of Islam's golden age, how will we build the Islamic world of the future? Indeed will the Islamic environment of tomorrow be identifiably ours?

These are not frivolous questions: all beings are affected positively or negatively by their surroundings but for Muslims it is a particularly critical matter.

Islam does not deal in dichotomies but in all encompassing unity. Spirit and body are one, man and nature are one. What is more, man is answerable to God for what man has created. Many of our greatest architectural achievements were designed to reflect the promises of life hereafter, to represent in this world what we are told of the next. Since all that we see and do resonates on the faith, the aesthetics of the environment we build and the quality of the social interactions that take place within those environments, reverberate on our spiritual life. The physical structure of Islam is therefore an important concern for me, charged as I am with the leadership of a Muslim community.

As Mr Talbot has told you, we have been involved in construction projects for some time. One of the largest of these undertakings is a 700-bed teaching hospital in Karachi with allied medical centres throughout Pakistan. We have found it easy to plan for excellence in this institution's services and teaching standards. But when we spoke of the best possible design for the buildings, excellence was not so easily found. I told our architect, who is American and who has specialized in hospital design, that his idiom should reflect the spirit of Islam. How was this to be done? I did not want him to succumb, through nostalgia, to mimicry of the past.

For the Karachi project, we elected to send our specialised hospital designer through many countries on an extended tour of important Islamic buildings. He was accompanied by a number of people connected with the project, including a fine Iranian architect. After much study, many discussions and several revisions, we have a design solution. But even after all this effort, I am not in a position to affirm that the solution is the right one. We have, on the other hand, identified and addressed ourselves to a fundamental problem for future generations of Muslims, and we have sought a solution. Nothing more.

Our difficulties in discovering what it means to build today in the Spirit of Islam have provoked me into what I expect will be a life-long commitment to identifying and spreading that spirit.

We have sent teams of architectural experts into many countries since the journey of our hospital designer and his group. These observers' reports on the built environment of Islam



today are disheartening reading. They tell us that the wonderful distinctiveness of Islamic architecture is disappearing. There is such homogenised blandness, that one is left with few visual clues to know where one is or who the people of this place might be.

Can this be the world of the people who built the mosque of Cordoba? Of the people whose marvellous urban systems in Isfahan are still studied by city planners? The people who created the Mughal gardens of Kashmir? The people who have fashioned the remarkable town architecture of Yemen?

Changes are coming upon Islam faster now than in the age of our greatest territorial expansion. In much of the Islamic world, modern infrastructures are going into place almost overnight. Roads, schools, power plants, hospitals, housing and drainage are needed immediately. Government officials rush to deal with the tides of people swamping the cities. There simply is not time for thoughts of the social fabric, of the long-range effects on the minds and spirits of the people being housed. But to build is to affect the world for a long time. Buildings conceived in haste to meet pressing needs will be negative presences for years ahead.

The treasures of our past are being destroyed and an ever-quickenning construction boom is bringing us too many buildings that I think we will live to despise. Should we allow future generations of Muslims to live without the self-respect of our own cultural and spiritual symbols of power, to practise their faith without also being reminded of that sense of scale in relation to the universe around us which is so particularly ours?

The field trips I have mentioned are but one part of our quest. A worldwide series of seminars on fundamental issues affecting modern Islamic architecture are assisting us to address the problems.

Eminent scholars of Islamic culture and distinguished architects and designers have met in Paris, Istanbul and Jakarta to discuss the issue and to share their knowledge. The fourth seminar will take place next month in Fez.

In all these journeys and meetings, we have been searching for a definition of Islamic architecture. One of our first conclusions has been that no single definition exists. Islamic architecture has reflected different climates, different times and materials, and thus today, in speaking about a revival, let me underline to you that I am far from referring to a new school! I do not believe it can exist, nor should it be encouraged, because this would stifle that strength which comes from the diversity of the Islamic world, and the creativity of those who will build around us in the years ahead. We have however sought the essentials that go beyond regional factors of climate and materials and the limitations of period technology. What have we found?

One of our major conclusions centred on the serenity of form. In Islamic design the basic forms are balanced and ruled by geometry. There is a sense of stability, tranquillity and equilibrium. And with serenity goes modesty. There is a lack of domination and pride. The superiority of man-made structures over natural environment is a concept alien to Islamic belief.

A second conclusion growing out of the first was the congruence of our traditions with natural forces. There is much Islamic spirit in the current effort in the West to respect and preserve ecological balance. As an example of this, Islamic builders have employed cooling systems in their houses for the last thousand years using only sun and wind for power. Such houses circulated cool air and produced chilled water and even ice.

We found too that the overwhelming unity of Islamic life which sees no division between body and spirit, between this world and the next, was a powerful influence on Islamic architecture. The desire to bring to this world some of the beauty of the hereafter acted as a constant barrier to the discordant or the haphazard in Islamic styles. The calligraphy which adorns so

much of what we have built was a constant reminder of spiritual content through its common design, the endless expression of the name of God.

Finally we found that we were able to specify applications of style which expressed our attitudes and beliefs. There is the framing of space for instance. We define each area. We construct a physical context for each activity in daily life. There is always a definite delineation between privacy and community, light areas and areas in shadow, small spaces and large spaces, interiors and exteriors, each is framed and set apart by itself usually with formality. There is further formality, it might even be called solemnity, in the passageways that connect all of these differing spaces.

And we were reminded that Islamic homes are sanctuaries, places of retreat and refreshment from the noise and movement of public life. Those aspects of our idiom that engender this sense of peace should come with us in our designs for the homes of the future. But here we come upon one of the many paradoxes that struck us in our research. How much of the privacy built into a Muslim house was necessitated by the sequestering of our women? When women step out of purda, no doubt the physical form of new households will reflect this change. On the other hand, perhaps the internal orientation of buildings can be most closely linked to the privacy and attitude to the family, the very base of Islam.

There is also a strong kinaesthetic experience in Islamic building. There is a play upon the physical senses - air currents touching the skin, the sound of moving water, the touch of varied surface textures, the richness of colour and the play of light and shade upon the vision, the scent of plants in the courtyards, are touches of the paradise to come.

These then are our findings. What will we do with them? We cannot offer any clear-cut solutions that correspond to the blueprint of the drawing board. Indeed, we do not seek them nor do we believe in them. But we can identify the paths that must be taken if such solutions are to be arrived at in the future. The signposts to these paths are already clearer.

We must begin with a new visual language for our future environment, one generated from within Islam, not devised abroad.

We must foster the growth of a new generation of architects knowledgeable about technology, sensitive to the cultural diversities, regional resources and separate national destinies of their countries and imbued with a renewed sense of pride in the value and dignity of Islamic culture.

We must instil that sense of respect in those who employ architects. The city planners, the government officials, the private clients who commission construction projects must be recognised as the powerful agents of change that they are. They must understand that to build is to exercise power and that their decisions resonate upon Islam.

We must encourage sensitivity to local needs. Labour-intensive construction and the teaching of building skills must be stressed, especially in the many regions where there is great unemployment. We must look for the use of local artisans and craftspeople and of local materials.

This is what we have learned about the problems we face and the ways in which they must be solved. Our assessments, our reflection, our meditation continue. Even so we are acting. Our first steps along the path begin now. To encourage new creative approaches we have instituted the Award for achievements in Islamic architecture. The first of these will be made at the end of 1980. The awarding of prizes, the recognition of achievement is only a part of our objective. We seek at the same time to open communications between Islam and the West and among builders in the Muslim nations. At present the exchange is very limited, indeed, almost non-existent. An architect in Lahore has little access to news of what is being built in Rabat and if he himself devises a good solution to a design problem, there are no channels through which he can share that solution.

We must also make every effort to see that those who make the journey to study far from home return to their native lands to use their knowledge, to plant the seeds of this revival in the soil of Islam. I might note here that having schools of architecture within the borders of Islamic countries does not guarantee an Islamic architecture. Many architectural schools in the Muslim world have orientated their teaching towards modern Western idioms instead of seeking to revive their own culture.

I am often asked how better understanding can be developed between East and West, whether bridges can be built and what they should look like. There are as many answers as the number of times the question is asked, but it is my deep conviction that a singular step should be taken, a magnificent relationship developed on which so much could be built if the West will cease to look at the Islamic architectural heritage simply as a matter of scholastic interest and admiration. On the contrary, give to it recognition of a different dimension, a dimension of the future. Enhance it, enrich it and enliven it, put at its disposal your talents, your knowledge and your creativity.

I do not wish to imply that the West is solely responsible for what is happening to Islamic environments. I am saying that you could do much more, as you are already doing for your own architectural heritage, to help revive the culture of Islam. Creativity knows no frontiers: it is not of the East nor the West, of the North nor the South, but it sometimes needs awakening, to be set alight, to be shown a purpose. I believe such a time is now.

The recognition that teaching and communications are of the essence and that for years to come the West's contribution is fundamental to an Islamic architectural revival, led me to create the first major teaching and information programme incorporating all the points I have mentioned.

To fulfil the immediate need for an information base for all who require it, and to move into the action as effectively as possible, this first programme will build upon the existing resources of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University. I would like to share with you my expectation of the clarity that will follow this time of confusion, this time of turning back to rediscover some of the foundations on which to build the future. Before the end of this century, before the 1420th year of our faith, I hope to see an Islamic civilization with a strong sense of purpose, that has become clear in its understanding of itself and of the world around it. And with those gifts of strength and understanding, our builders, our governments and our private patrons should be able to create an environment that will personify the Spirit of modern Islam.

I hope that in the years ahead we shall see Islamic cities representing to the world all that the City of God and man can be. Cities of which all Muslims can be proud, where our magnificent heritage and our firm place in this new age, are manifest.

As we work towards that vision of the future we will remember the Sura of Light from the Qur'an. It tells us that the oil of the blessed olive tree lights the lamp of understanding, a light that belongs neither to the East nor West. We are to give this light to all. In that spirit, all that we learn will belong to the world - and that too is part of the vision I share with you.

## **Presidential Address at the International Seerat Conference**

**His Highness the Aga Khan**  
**March 12, 1976 Karachi, Pakistan**

Mawlana Kausar Niazi, Your Excellencies, eminent scholars,

When Mawlana Kausar Niazi invited me to preside at today's gathering of the Seerat Conference, I felt both trepidation and joy, trepidation because few subjects could be more awe inspiring for any Muslim to speak on, joy as few subjects could give greater happiness to be involved with. Let me add that I am also deeply appreciative of the occasion offered to me by Mawlana Kausar Niazi to meet and greet you all. Few conferences can have gathered so many men of outstanding intellect, who have devoted so much time and wisdom to the study of Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him.

In addressing you shortly today, I will begin by making a request: One hundred and seventy two eminent scholars from forty-eight countries have gathered in Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar and Karachi to present the results of their research and reflection on various aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet. From all these exchanges, from all the private debates which have preceded and succeeded the presentation of each paper, will have come an immense range of new thoughts, new ideas and new understanding of the Prophet's life. I sincerely request that you have available to all Muslims a complete printed record of these papers and the subsequent debates.

In your high intellectual world many of you are fortunate to have the time to reflect on the great aspects of Prophet Muhammad's life. It is a blessing that many a Muslim would wish for, but due to circumstances beyond his control, indeed the very nature of modern life, he cannot have.

The poorer countries of Islam have ahead of them years of increasingly hard work if they wish to progress materially to acceptable standards of every day life. The richer countries, especially those that have new means, will rapidly find that this wealth, blessing that it is, will impose upon them heavy new responsibilities. They will have to administrate this wealth wisely, in the best interest of their citizens, but also keeping in mind that they have a heavy responsibility to their less well endowed brother Muslim countries, and indeed to the human race at large. Thus it is my profound conviction that Islamic Society in the years ahead will find that our traditional concept of time, a limitless mirror in which to reflect on the eternal, will become a shrinking cage, an invisible trap from which fewer and fewer will escape.

I have observed in the Western world a deeply changing pattern of human relations. The anchors of moral behaviour appear to have dragged to such depths that they no longer hold firm the ship of life: what was once wrong is now simply unconventional, and for the sake of individual freedom must be tolerated. What is tolerated soon becomes accepted. Contrarily, what was once right is now viewed as outdated, old fashioned and is often the target of ridicule.

There is no justification for delaying the search for the answer to this question by the Muslims of the world, because we have the knowledge that Islam is Allah's final message, the Quran His final book and Muhammed His last Prophet. We are blessed that the answers drawn from these sources guarantee that neither now, nor at any time in the future will we be going astray.

As the demands on his time increase, every Muslim will find it more and more difficult to seek for himself the answer to the fundamental question of how he should live his life for it to be truly Muslim. It is men such as you who will have to bring forth the answers, answers which will have to be practical and realistic in the world of today and tomorrow. Rather than let force of circumstance impose upon us through our default in not having suitably prepared ourselves for the future, ways of life which are not or should not be ours, we must ourselves design the path we should tread.

In seeking to define what our Islamic Society should be in times ahead, 50 and 100 and 200 years hence we should, I believe, be aware that the Muslims of this world cover such an amazing range of historical, ethnic and cultural backgrounds that a completely monolithic answer may not be found. I am convinced on the other hand, that we do want to avoid so much diversity that our Muslim countries are in conflict amongst themselves or that they are so divided that they are incapable successfully of facing common enemies, be they cultural, religious, national or otherwise. This is why I so applaud Pakistan for having organized the first Muslim Summit Conference, and now this Seerat Conference, for it is only through dialogue, personal contacts and continuous exchanges that the great diversity of cultures, knowledge, outlook and resources can be co-ordinated and brought to bear fruit for the Muslim world.

Let me return, now, to the question of what Muslim Society should seek to be in the years ahead. Islam, as even non-Muslims have observed, is a way of life. This means that every aspect of the individual's daily existence is guided by Islam: his family relations, his business relations, his education, his health, the means and manner by which he gains his livelihood, his philanthropy, what he sees and hears around him, what he reads, the way he regulates his time, the buildings in which he lives, learns and earns.

I cannot think of any time in Islamic history when Muslims have had a greater opportunity to unite, and to ensure that the society in which they live is that which they have defined and chosen for themselves.

Not only are all forms of human communication easier than ever before in history, but rarely, if ever has the Muslim world had such means to ensure its future. Conferences such as this seeking inspiration from the life of the Holy Prophet could render no greater service to Islam than to assist in defining what steps can be taken, where, and how, to ensure that our people can live in the years ahead in greater peace, greater prosperity and in an Islamic Society which will not be overrun or simply taken by surprise, by forces, pressures or concepts which are totally alien and may damage us irretrievably.

In our search for a solution, I am convinced that we must call upon our own men and women, who have achieved positions of eminence anywhere in the world, and persuade them to return, for us to benefit from their knowledge, their learning and their work. All too often in my journeys I have met or learnt of outstanding Muslim scholars, doctors, scientists, and architects who have remained abroad, or who, when they do come home, have failed to receive the support and encouragement necessary for them to bring to their nations' benefit their Muslim outlook on key areas of modern progress.

Any meaningful human endeavour, any original thinking, any authentic research, will require moral encouragement and material support. This we must provide, not only during the individual's initial years of learning, but equally when he leaves the restricted life of his academic centre to enter into the wider world of national or international activity.

The Holy Prophet's life gives us every fundamental guideline that we require to resolve the problem as successfully as our human minds and intellects can visualise. His example of integrity, loyalty, honesty, generosity both of means and of time, his solicitude for the poor, the weak and the sick, his steadfastness in friendship, his humility in success, his magnanimity in victory, his simplicity, his wisdom in conceiving new solutions for problems which could not be solved by traditional methods, without affecting the fundamental concepts of Islam, surely all these are foundations which, correctly understood and sincerely interpreted, must enable us to conceive what should be a truly modern and dynamic Islamic Society in the years ahead.

## **Convocation Address at the University of Sind**

**His Highness the Aga Khan  
February 6, 1970 Hyderabad, Pakistan**

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

You have paid my family a great honour by inviting me here today to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from this famous centre of learning. I am most grateful to you all, and as a Muslim, it makes me especially happy that this ceremony should be taking place at a university whose development has been so intimately linked with the historic province of Sind.

As you pointed out in your very generous tribute to my forbearers, and particularly my grandfather, both my family and the Ismaili Community have enjoyed close associations with Sind over many centuries.

Today I am addressing an intellectual elite which, very soon no doubt, will hold in its hands, the destiny of Pakistan. I propose therefore to talk briefly about one of the major problems facing Muslim countries everywhere in the world today. It is clearly an important and sensitive topic so that I speak with real humility and no little apprehension. Indeed, I appeal at the outset to your generosity should I falter, and I am fully aware that no single person can claim to offer a complete solution. At most, I can attempt merely to stimulate further thought and discussion, but leading very soon I hope to purposeful action.

The issue, very simply, is this: what kind of nation states do we hope will emerge in the Muslim world during the next century? What are we looking for? What do we want of our society? What kind of institutions should we seek to create?

These questions will have to be answered. And they must be answered by you. Indeed, within thirty years, you will be living in the twenty-first century. You are already living in the largest Muslim country in the world.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, most of the Muslim world was in one form or the other subjugated by the will of the West. England and France between them controlled most of the Middle East including Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, the whole of North Africa with Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya; most of those parts of Africa south of the Sahara which had substantial Muslim population such as Nigeria, Senegal, Dahomey, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zanzibar; and finally most of those parts of Asia which were totally or substantially Muslim, including the Indian subcontinent, and Malaysia. Thus at the dawn of the twentieth century, practically no Muslim areas of the world were self-governing. This is a startling fact, but none the less true.

One of the many consequences was that the concept of Muslim statehood was broken in time and in action to be replaced by the concepts which were western in inspiration as well as in practice. The art of government no longer directly involved the Muslims of the world. Those who did concern themselves were never in the position of testing their ideas against the harsh realities of nineteenth and twentieth century power politics. I suggest therefore that there has been a very prolonged vacuum in Muslim responsibilities in this field and that this vacuum in turn provoked a deep apathy towards problems of Islamic statehood. Few men in their daily lives have time to worry about other peoples' problems, and at the dawn of the twentieth century, problems of Muslim statehood were completely dormant.

Within the last 30 years, most of the Muslim world has regained its independence, and now is totally in control of its own affairs. But the loss of control of government in the recent past has left the Muslims of today in a situation either of prolonging the inherited forms of Western Government or of adopting a pragmatic approach, the results of which are impossible to forecast.

If the Muslim countries had controlled their own destinies over a longer and more continuous period of recent history, there is little doubt that appropriate institutions would already have evolved in a form which would have come to terms with this technological and materialistic age. So far, however, there simply has not been enough time.

In the Muslim world of the twenty-first century, what is going to be the accepted form of Government? What institutions will be best suited to provide the Islamic world with stable, progressive government which will have a strong and dynamic sense of direction?

The questions I ask particularly concern Pakistan. It is first of all the largest Muslim state. Secondly, with general elections due here within a matter of months, it is a question you will soon have to answer in any case. Thirdly, Pakistan takes its place in one of the most forward-looking and dynamic regions of the Muslim world which, with Iran and Turkey, and especially through the agency of RCD, is certain to play an increasingly important role in the destiny of Muslims everywhere.

Let us for a moment review, as it is today, the Muslim part of the world; the Arab Middle East has been torn apart and has been in turmoil for years. The sheer pace of events, political and economic, does not seem to have given time and peace enough for the local leadership and society as a whole to develop stable governmental institutions. Largely for the same reasons, regional co-operation under the prevailing conditions in this area has been faced with a virtually impossible task.

North Africa has in my view been a great deal more successful than is yet generally realized; regional co-operation is well underway, the economies of Tunisia and Morocco are developing well, and there has been political stability coupled with dynamic leadership. But the population of North Africa is truly minimal in comparison with that of the RCD and this is why I repeat that it is here, in Pakistan and in the RCD, that lies the most essential area for the development of Muslim statehood which must stem from a society, the goals of which have been clearly established and universally accepted.

Pakistan was conceived by Muslims and for Islam. Everyone here will agree with me, I am sure, that the source of national motivation in the future must continue to be our faith. But once this is said, how is it to be achieved? If institutions are born from society, then I affirm that it is to our society that we must turn, and ask ourselves: If Islam is to be the source of inspiration, how do we transform this inspiration into practical terms of everyday life? And how do we do this and at the same time continue to make material progress which, as I have said earlier, very often has its origins in the western, Christian world? These questions have a special urgency and relevance in a democratic society such as Pakistan is now seeking to create. It is society which gives birth to its institutions in democracy - and not the institutions which shape and impose themselves upon society.

I am convinced that our faith and our heritage contain all the indicators that we shall need. More than this, I am convinced that it will take relatively little effort to isolate those elements which, through the centuries, were responsible for the amazing development of the Muslim Empire. And once we have identified these basic elements, we should be able, without difficulty, to use them to our advantage.

Let me take as an example one of the most important and fundamental aspects of our everyday lives; the buildings we live in. For five centuries, Muslim architecture led the world in concept, in design, in finish and even in structural ingenuity. Millions of non-Muslims every year visit Islamic monuments in the Middle East, in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, and in North Africa. And yet what is being done today to develop our own Islamic architecture of the twenty-first century? Practically nothing. Our office buildings, our schools, our hospitals, our banks and insurance companies - nearly all are copies, monkeyed and mimicked from styles and designs which have been imported. I ask you today to think about this: is it really impossible to adapt for our modern needs those magnificent finishes and building materials so widely used in our past? If our historic buildings used red stone, tile and marble, must we really now only use concrete and glass? Must we abandon the remarkable wooden and stone

carved trellis work that is so typical of our artistic heritage? And what of the fountains that have been so intimately connected with Muslim architecture at all times and in all parts of the world? Are we powerless to build a fountain as a decoration to our most imposing buildings? Is it really beyond our powers to revive traditional concepts of landscaping? Must the gardens of Shalimar remain just a beautiful historic curiosity?

Let me turn to another aspect of Islamic society: our intellectual elite. In the past, much of the dynamism of Muslim society was born from the leaders of the faith: the Imams, the Pirs and Mullahs. This identity between the leaders of the faith and the empire's intellectual elite was a continuous source of strength both to the faith and those whose duty it was to govern the empire. How many aspiring Mullahs or Imams today enter secular universities and obtain degrees in secular subjects? And vice-versa, how many university graduates, after completing their degrees, turn their lives to directing the flock of the faithful? Let me not be misunderstood - I criticise neither Pirs nor Mullahs nor Imams nor degree-holders. I simply state that in future I believe it will be in our society's interest to have a much wider platform in common between our religious and our secular leaders. Our religious leadership must be acutely aware of secular trends, including those generated by this age of science and technology. Equally, our academic or secular elite must be deeply aware of Muslim history, of the scale and depth of leadership exercised by the Islamic empire of the past in all fields.

It is through the creation of such a new elite, inspired by, and widely read in everything related to our heritage, that there must come about a revival in Muslim thought. The whole approach to education, without becoming archaic, should begin now to re-introduce, as widely as possible, the work and thought of our great Muslim writers and philosophers. Thus, from the nursery school to the university, the thoughts of the young will be inspired by our own heritage and not that of some foreign culture. Again, let there be no misunderstanding: I am not in any way opposed to the literature or the art or the thought of the West. I simply maintain that the Islamic heritage is just as great and that it is up to us to bring it to the forefront again. When our nursery school children first begin to read, why should they not let their imaginations build upon the prowess of the Great Khaled rather than Wellington or Napoleon? And if the student of philosophy seeks a degree, should he not be encouraged to read about even Al-Hallaj rather than Hegel or Kierkegaard?

This has been described as the age of technology and blessed may be those who through their technological discoveries have enabled man to conquer space and to hope one day to draw sufficient food from the earth and the sea to feed himself. Blessed also may be those who have helped eliminate from this earth such crippling diseases as poliomyelitis and perhaps one day cancer. But through all this development, hand in hand and side by side with it, the spirit of Islam must survive. A society without a strong sense of its own identity has time and again in human history proved to be well on the way to decay.

I do not pretend to know an infinitesimal part of the answers to the problems facing the Muslim state in the twenty-first century. But I believe that its inspiration and its institutions must come from a Muslim society which has a clear understanding of the pillars of Islamic greatness in the past.

We are still in the process of disentangling ourselves from a long period of foreign rule, and although the early years of independence have provided immense problems to successive governments, almost a generation has now passed. We must renew our resolve and determination to complete the revival of our own Islamic heritage so that it may become the stepping stone to a brilliant future. The need to break finally with the immediate and largely alien past, and to rebuild on the foundations of our historic greatness is more than a condition of further progress; it has now become an urgent necessity throughout the Muslim world.



## **Convocation Address at Peshawar University**

### **An Address at the Platinum Jubilee Ceremony**

**His Highness the Aga Khan**

**November 30, 1967 Peshawar, Pakistan**

Mr Chancellor, Mr Vice Chancellor, professors, students of this university and distinguished guests,

I am deeply moved by the kindness of your welcome and by the outstanding honour this University has done in bestowing an honorary degree upon me today. I speak these words in no formal sense, but from the heart. I do this especially because, as a Muslim it will remain a proud memory that the first such academic honour I have received has been given to me by this renowned Islamic seat of learning in Pakistan.

This degree is all the more precious because of the illustrious personages who have been earlier recipients of your honour, and because this University is situated in one of the most historically awesome sites on earth. Speaking to you today, I cannot fail to recollect the names of people, places, and civilisations which light the glittering past of this region. Peshawar is not only the gateway of Central Asia, but much more it is a jewel box of history. The walls are nature's mountainous fortifications and the key is the Khyber Pass. Inside are the names of many of history's most precious jewels: Gandhara, the Greeks, the Buddhists, the Huns, the Brahmins, the Ghaznavids, the Mughals, the Sikhs, the Afghans, the Iranis, the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Afridis, the Aryans, Alexander the Great, Darius, Genghis Khan, the Sassanians, Kandahar and many more. Few cities of learning can boast such a variegated and colourful past.

I have had the good fortune to have seen much of this world since I travel more widely than most people, and my responsibilities bring me into contact with the advanced industrial societies of the West, and with the less developed, newly independent nations in Asia, and Africa. Some of the contrasts I have observed have convinced me that by no means do all the advantages and hopes for the future lie with the wealthier developed nations of the world.

Leaders of newly independent nations often comment, sadly or angrily as the case may be, on the widening gap between the rich nations and the poor. But there are two ways of looking at this, either in the absolute, in which case even the poorer nations are making considerable progress, or relatively where the gap between the two groups in living standards and technological progress continues to widen at a frightening speed.

The explanation for all this is well enough known to you. We have the population explosion, the shortage of human skills and material capital, the problems of political stability, and so forth. The list is a long one and the solutions will not quickly or easily be found.

One particular problem which is endemic to most countries and to which the President of Pakistan refers in his recent illuminating autobiography, is inevitably more keenly felt in newly independent nations. After generations, sometimes centuries of foreign rule, ordinary people find it hard to associate themselves and their own fortunes with those of their Governments. For so long "they", the rulers, have been quite literally a race apart, remote and distant from the ordinary activities of daily life.

The moment of independence may release this mental vacuum for a while, but it takes a great deal of time-consuming work by already hard-pressed leaders to stop the old habits of apathy creeping back again.

However, in all these complex and some times well-worn arguments, I often find myself on the side of the optimist. I do not believe that the scales are irretrievably loaded on the side of the rich, developed nations of the West. Even in a purely material sense the newer nations have more assets than they sometimes realise.

The very fact that the younger nations are experiencing rapid social and economic change after independence, makes their people more adaptable to new machines and new techniques. They should realise this, seek out the facts, identify them and then fully exploit what they can offer. This may involve training a small team of experts whose single task is to keep a constant watch on the opportunities arising from research and new developments overseas.

In many cases new industrial and production processes can be tested more thoroughly and less expensively in the developing countries than in the Western world where labour is costly and unionisation often chokes young and new ideas before they can reach maturity. Here in Pakistan many new industrial ventures are utilising processes which are at least partially experimental. This enables your youth to be in permanent contact with the vanguard of industrial developments and such an adventurous spirit must be encouraged. I fear less the inability of young countries to create new ventures than the rapid assassination of new projects by obsolescence.

Material progress apart, I do not think it should ever be assumed that only the smaller, poorer nations are faced by apparently insoluble problems. Western Europe and North America possess much that can be envied. They also face social and moral conflicts which are far more daunting than known in Asia or Africa. Increasingly, I believe, thinking people both in Europe and America are asking: Where is this all prosperity leading us? Are we any happier? Do we get as much satisfaction out of living as did our fathers and forefathers?

These indeed are relevant, urgent questions. There has been a fundamental challenge to the traditional and in this case, mainly Christian religious values. The younger generation has almost completely forsaken its churches. The pressure of an acquisitive society has made quite frightening demands on family life. Mothers with younger children go out to work in the millions. The juvenile crime rate soars upwards, homes are broken, and the family unit itself is undermined at its source.

The working family in the West can earn all the money it needs in four or five days a week - and then with only six hours work a day. Its capacity for leisure is growing every year. But what does the family do with it? Look at television? Perhaps. But what will be seen on television? Are they any nearer the complete and contented man of all our dreams?

Few would risk an affirmative answer to these questions. What has been called the permissive society where anything goes, nothing matters, nothing is sacred or private any more, is not a promising foundation for a brave and upright new world. This fearful chase after material ease must surely be tempered by peace of mind, by conscience, by moral values, which must be resuscitated. If not, man will simply have converted the animal instinct of feeding himself before others and even at the expense of others, into perhaps a more barbaric instinct of feeding himself and then hoarding all he can at the cost of the poor, the sick and the hungry.

It would be wrong and very foolish not to recognise that the developed industrial countries also have much from which the new nations can learn. The picture is not all dark but it might well deteriorate.

The West has achieved, on the whole, a degree of political stability and administrative efficiency which other parts of the world cannot but envy. The West has won the freedom to enjoy, and at times often slips into the licence of abusing, the pursuits of leisure and culture. They have won this freedom, not for a privileged few, but for the great mass of their people.

Two questions arise. First, do we wish for the developing nations of the world similar freedom to enjoy a more prosperous life? There can be no doubt that the answer is "yes".

The second question is more delicate. If the developing nations succeed in raising the standards of living to such an extent that there is far greater freedom and privilege to enjoy leisure, how is this leisure to be used, and what values will govern its use?

It is here that the East, that Asia, nay that this very University can contribute something of primordial and everlasting value. It is my deepest conviction that if Islamic society is to avoid following blindly the course of Western society without taking the trouble to raise guards against the latter's weaknesses and deficiencies, a thorough rediscovery, revitalisation and reintegration of our traditional values must be achieved.

They must be drawn forth from under the decades of foreign rule which have accumulated like thick sets of paper that have rested for generations on top of the finest oriental painting making the edges turn yellow, but the centre piece remaining as colourful and lively, for us to discover, as when it was originally completed. In all forms of art, painting, calligraphy, architecture, city planning; in all forms of science, medicine, astronomy, engineering; in all expressions of thought, philosophy, ritualism, spiritualism, it is of fundamental importance that our own traditional values and attitudes should permeate our new society.

It would be traumatic if those pillars of the Islamic way of life, social justice, equality, humility and generosity, enjoined upon us all, were to lose their force or wide application in our young society. It must never be said generations hence that in our greed for the material good of the rich West we have forsaken our responsibilities to the poor, to the orphans, to the traveller, to the single woman.

The day, we no longer know how, nor have the time nor the faith to bow in prayer to Allah because the human soul that He has told us is eternal is no longer of sufficient importance to us to be worthy of an hour of our daily working, profit-seeking time, will be a sunless day of despair.

It is eminent seats of learning such as this that can synthesise and transmit to the younger generations the proper balance between the Western search of well-being and the Eastern spiritual, human and cultural traditions. I believe the future does reserve better standards of living for us than what we have at present, but in order to enjoy them fully, we must know today what will be the fundamental principles of our lives tomorrow.

I render sincere and high tribute to Peshawar University that has set out to fulfil this essential and monumental task.

May Allah crown your efforts with brilliant success.

## **Presidential Address at the First Anniversary of Mindanao University**

**His Highness the Aga Khan**

**November 24, 1963 Manilla, Philippines**

President Isidro, Senator Alonto, members of the Faculty, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by saying how very honoured and happy I am to be with you on this great occasion. I appreciated enormously your kind words and wonderful receptions and hope that when I leave you this afternoon you will be sure that you have one more sincere friend and admirer of the University of Mindanao.

Strangely this will be the first convocation at which I will understand the address. When I graduated from Harvard, the laws required that the convocation address should be in Latin, so I had the unique honour of standing in boiling sun for forty five minutes listening to a speech of which I understood not one word. Maybe the Faculty did not appreciate the process of being slowly cooked to the rhythm of Latin words as the year after I left, it was allowed that the convocation address should be in English a more civilized process but even Harvard takes time to learn.

Having done my primary and secondary education in Switzerland and then gone to university in America, I have had perhaps a unique occasion to compare the standards of education of the Western world with those of the Middle East, Asia and Africa. As a result I am now deeply convinced that man's position in society, wherever he may be, will depend less and less upon his cultural or family heritage and more and more on the power and development of his mind.

In every society I have seen, it is the intellectual elite which is capturing the outstanding offices, the most interesting work, the best situations. This trend is, in fact, bound to be the case, so long as the world population continues to increase and we are forced to deeper and deeper specialisation.

The great Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates were created through the spread of the message of Islam and the conquering power of the Muslim armies, but once the waves of conquest were over, once the Muslim religion had spread from Arabia westwards to Southern France and eastwards to China, there arose the problem of organising and running the State.

If this state had been weak internally, I submit that it would have been rapidly overthrown. On the contrary it lived for centuries.

What was the power, what were the centres of force which provided the Caliphates with the material to govern? From whence came the unifying force which allowed these immense empires to weld together peoples of different languages, ethnic origins and cultures?

The Caliphates drew administrative machinery from some of the greatest centres of learning which have ever existed. The Universities in Damascus and Baghdad, and later those of Cairo, Tehran Cordova and Istanbul were centres of learning unparalleled anywhere else. Even in those days, once the brute force of the armies had been withdrawn it was the power of the intellectual elite which took over and governed, ran and maintained the State.

During the two Caliphates, the Muslim Universities were producing the best scholars, doctors, astronomers and philosophers. Today where are we? Have we institutions of learning which can compare with the Sorbonne, Harvard, Yale, Cambridge, Oxford, M.I.T.?

Throughout my journeys I have been deeply pained to see the lack of initiative which my brother Muslims have shown in educational matters. In some circles there may have been a fear that modern education would tend to lessen the sharpness and deepness of our Faith. I am afraid that I must reject this with vehemence.

God has given us the miracle of life with all its attributes: the extraordinary manifestations of sunrise and sunset, of sickness and recovery, of birth and death, but surely if He has given us the means with which to remove ourselves from this world so as to go to other parts of the Universe, we can but accept as further manifestations the creation and destructions of stars, the birth and death of atomic particles, the fleeting new sound and light waves.

I am afraid that the torch of intellectual discovery, the attraction of the unknown, the desire for intellectual self-perfection have left us. I fully realise that one needs today tools with which to extend the realms of man's knowledge, and that generally speaking these tools are the possessions of the more advanced essentially Christian parts of the world. But what is the point in undergoing untold of misery for political independence if the result is no better than abject dependence intellectually and economically on one's old political masters.

Here you have at your disposal a tool which is being fashioned into an instrument for self-perfection. But it must never be thought, I submit, that this tool is or will become perfect. It will take all the vigilance of the founders, the faculty and the students to see that your standards are continually raised, that your instrument for learning is continually ameliorated so as to render you greater service at less cost in time and energy.

I hope that those students who came to this University, and that those students who will leave it for further studies, will approach their work with sharp vengeance - vengeance for the torpor and indifference of the past; vengeance for having temporarily lost their rightful position amongst the intellectual elite of the country.

We must, I suggest, use every opening available to us to make good the time and learning which we have lost, no matter if we turn to institutions steeped in foreign cultures so long as it is for our own improvement and in the process we do not lose our own identity. Not so long ago, after all, these cultures were turning to us.

If I have come to be with you today, it is to prove to you that you have brother Muslims in other parts of the world who are fighting the same battle as you if anything in more difficult circumstances under governments which are not always made up of ahl al-kitab or people of the Book, and that these Muslims are deeply conscious of the battle which you are waging. Their interest, however, is not limited to a simple consciousness of your difficulties; they wish to help you and to give you morally and materially all the support which they can muster.

Let us, therefore, put our backs to the wheel and show the state in which we live that we are determined to become first class citizens, nay leaders, not for the futile glory of leadership but to help this country become a better place in which to live and ensure that, even if we cannot reap the fruit of our labour, our children will be born to brighter horizons.